

No fooling! It's...

THE VOICE OF DOOM

#94

April 17, 1984

Circulation: 116

by BRUX

Earthshaking News!

My friends, I hope you all will forgive me, for I have, behind your backs, taken a very drastic action.

"Well, BRUX, what did you do this time?"

Um, some of you might remember that two issues ago, I hinted at some radical changes in my life, adding that this did not mean I was signing up for a new Game. But, I couldn't quite bring myself to level with you...

"What is it, BRUX? What are you trying to tell us?"

Ah, well, and last issue I managed to work up the nerve to inform you that I was contemplating entering a Game sometime in the next two or three years. But still the whole truth did not quite come out...

"For god's sake, BRUX, spit it out! We're your friends and we aren't going to kill you for it, whatever it is!"

Well, I'm really embarrassed to have to admit this. I...I really don't have time to enter a Game of Regular Diplomacy (some things still are sacred, after all), but...but... And I know I said I'd never play under a GM whose Houserules aren't 20 pages long, but...

"BRUX, TELL US!!!"

I...I've signed up for a Gunboat Game in Cathy Cunningham's zine, and...

...and ninety-nine zillion loyal, screaming Doomies fainted dead away in shock.

The Voice of Doom is a journal of postal Diplomacy published every now and then by Bruce Linsey, 73 Ashuelot St., Apt. 3, Dalton, MA 01226. Phone (413)684-0567. Subs are 10 issues for \$5.00. Standbys are wanted. There are no game openings.

Diplomacy is a registered trademark for a game invented by Allan B. Calhamer and copyrighted by Avalon Hill.

The deadline for all games contained herein is May 11, 1984.

C R I O N

1982Y

MID-ATLANTIC PALISI

Summer 1912

RUSSIA: AIR? A Lost T CEM

Fall 1912

ENGLAND (Annoyed): A Pal-BNG (F IRL S), F NAT-MIO, F HWY S RUSSIAN A StP (NSU)

FRANCE (Williams): A Mar-SPA (A CAS S), F Eng-BRE

GERMANY (W. Schmidt): A Mun-BUR, A SIL-MUN (A BER S, A RUM S), A Lyn-PRU, F Bot-BAL, F Edt-MPH

ITALY (Hawerton): A VIE H, A TUS U, F Tyr-WES, A TYO H, F POR S TURKISH F Wes-Mid
A Pie-MAR, F Ste(sc) S A Pie-Mar (ann)

RUSSIA (Raymond Smith): AIR? A War U (1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44, 45, 46, 47, 48, 49, 50, 51, 52, 53, 54, 55, 56, 57, 58, 59, 60, 61, 62, 63, 64, 65, 66, 67, 68, 69, 70, 71, 72, 73, 74, 75, 76, 77, 78, 79, 80, 81, 82, 83, 84, 85, 86, 87, 88, 89, 90, 91, 92, 93, 94, 95, 96, 97, 98, 99, 100, 101, 102, 103, 104, 105, 106, 107, 108, 109, 110, 111, 112, 113, 114, 115, 116, 117, 118, 119, 120, 121, 122, 123, 124, 125, 126, 127, 128, 129, 130, 131, 132, 133, 134, 135, 136, 137, 138, 139, 140, 141, 142, 143, 144, 145, 146, 147, 148, 149, 150, 151, 152, 153, 154, 155, 156, 157, 158, 159, 160, 161, 162, 163, 164, 165, 166, 167, 168, 169, 170, 171, 172, 173, 174, 175, 176, 177, 178, 179, 180, 181, 182, 183, 184, 185, 186, 187, 188, 189, 190, 191, 192, 193, 194, 195, 196, 197, 198, 199, 200, 201, 202, 203, 204, 205, 206, 207, 208, 209, 210, 211, 212, 213, 214, 215, 216, 217, 218, 219, 220, 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PEGASUS (continued)

Cast of Players:

AUSTRIA: Randal Husk

ENGLAND: Jake Halverstadt

FRANCE: Jim Chatfield

GERMANY: John MacFarlane

ITALY: Mike Jones (out 1905)

RUSSIA: Mike Meisner (won 1911)

TURKEY: Michael Spink (resigned S '02), Jeff Punches

Game Notes: The Austrian, English, and Turkish end-game statements are actually excerpts from the statements submitted earlier by those players, when the game "ended" several months ago. The German and Russian statements are current -- they're the only ones that came in this time around.

Jake Halverstadt (ENGLAND): ...I feel lucky to have played with a number of competent players in this, my first postal game. The quality of play & the people I've gotten to know certainly have left me wanting to play a lot more postal Dip games...

I peaked early in PEGASUS, and I cheated to get it. I had a good ally in Germany -- John MacFarlane -- and I stabbed him coldly and efficiently. And I wish I had never done it. As I've said many times, I'm sorry, John. I owe you one.

What goes around comes around. As ye sow, so shall ye reap. I pulled a couple of cheap shots on France -- Jim Chatfield -- and he ripped me back. Just at the point where I stood all alone -- or so I felt -- he offered me a helping hand. And fucked me coldly and efficiently. Well done, Jim. You saved Europe from the English. My only regret is that I never got to know you. Put more of yourself in your letters -- I think it would help your play a great deal.

If I can't have a solo win -- and since I fixed it so John didn't have a chance -- I wish Mike Meisner could have won. ((Remember, this is old...)) Mike plays a good game and writes a good letter. Besides John, Mike made the best proposals, and knows what he's doing. At the game's opening, I proposed an E/G/R triplis. I wish it could have happened.

I had a lot of fun trading letters with Randal Husk (Austria) even though we were really in two different spheres of influence. Though I guess I was at least partly mistaken. Randal was the player -- I suppose I can say this -- that I figured I was going to fight for the win. Why? I can't even really say. Because Italy was never really a factor, because a Turkish standby was called in -- so we're talking Austria's neighborhood. It was fun, Randal. I'll be looking for you down the road.

Jeff Punches (Turkey) inherited a car that couldn't get out of first gear, and then blew the engine. He and John were going to be playing the Little Sisters of the Poor down in the Southeast. Would they have become The House that Roared if the game continued to its natural end? I'd like to think so. I'm glad to know Jeff will be in my political game. It'll be good to stay in touch.

Thanks to all of you for a very special game. I'm sorry that I may never play with any of you again. To those of you I let down: I'm sorry. To those of you I smacked around: hey, that's why we're in this silly hobby.

I'd like to close by quoting -- of all people -- Ernie Banks. "Let's play two!" Anytime, anywhere, anyhow.

Randal Husk (AUSTRIA): This was my first game playing Austria. In fact, it was only my second postal game. It certainly was fun! When I first looked at the list of players, I wondered if there wasn't some kind of omen in it. There were three players named Michael, and three whose names started with "J". I wondered if there wouldn't be some kind of natural affinity between them. Turned out that it did not work out that way at all.

((PEGASUS continues next page))

The game started out with Russia wanting to ally with Turkey. Fortunately for me, the first Turkish player did not write to Mike Meisner (Russia), whereas I wrote both of them. So, Mike decided to go with me, though I think that it was with a grain of salt that he agreed to that.

I wrote to everyone. More than once. And generally, I was truthful with all of them. Except Turkey. Knowing how Russia felt (and by now, Russia and I were working very well together), I was really worried about Turkey. I used almost every trick I could think of against Turkey: innuendos, questionable information, poor phrasing of truths, half-truths, etc. And I managed to keep Russia and me working against him. Just when I had him where I wanted him, two things happened: Russia decided to attack Germany, and we got a new Turkish player, Jeff Panches. Just as well, too. I had run out of dirty tricks that Turkey hadn't seen me use. So I could re-use some of them.

Jeff played an outstanding game. He always managed to second-guess us. It wasn't until he and Russia joined up and I managed to get Russia to abandon him that I was finally able to reduce him, and that was with the help of his first error (forgot to retreat). Jeff, I would love to meet you some day. And I hope that we will get to work together in a game. I regret that I had to fight you, but I was committed when you joined the game.

Italy played an interesting game. From the first, I tried to get him to go against France, and he refused. If France had not attacked him, thus deciding him to suicide against France, it would have been an entirely different game, especially for me.

Although I wrote to France several times, Jim only wrote to me when he wanted something. Still, the reports were that he corresponded well with his allies (and others). I would have to guess that he is skillful. It is my guess that France is the one who proposed this draw ((when the game first ended)), hoping that enough people would forget to vote against it. (He was about to be attacked from all sides and knew it.) I overlooked it entirely. I did not even recall that anything had been proposed at all! Great move, Jim. I hope we all learn a lesson from it.

Germany (John MacFarlane) is an excellent tactician, and writes a lot. I will play with or against him any day of the week. It was lucky for me that he and I both wanted to "non-agress". I think that he wanted to attack me about the time that Russia attacked him so skillfully. I was glad I could appear to be lending him a hand later in the game, although I am not sure that I really did him any good. I think that he and Jeff Panches were the best tacticians in the game.

Everybody is familiar with Jake Halverstadt's writing ability. Loved playing with him. He was very sly. We had a cordial relationship from the outset, even during later hostilities between him and Russia. But I do not think that I was actually able to help him, even though I tried a few times. One thing in particular to say to Jake: JAKE, DON'T GET INTO THIS DIPLOMACY HOBBY TOO FAR, TOO FAST!! DON'T BURN OUT. BECOME A BOULDER, NOT A PEBBLE. And keep me on your mailing list, OK?

Russia and I had a very good thing going. I think that we both made a few minor mistakes, but helped each other. I don't believe that he ever really trusted me. Too bad.

...All in all, I really enjoyed this game, and learned from it. But I do have one big complaint: now I have to look around for another game. I am not sure it will be as good as this one with the high quality players. Rats! I wasn't ready for it to end!

((Omitted from the above is a brief section in which Randal claims that the establishment wasn't actually wasn't: I somehow lost track of a change of orders he phoned in. I'm not sure Randal wanted it printed at this late date; I wrote him privately when I heard about the incident and though neither of us can be sure who erred, the matter was settled with a minimum of hassle.))

((PEGASUS continues next page))

PEGASUS (continued)

Mike Meisner (RUSSIA): So, what's supposed to go into one of these things? I'm sure no one wants to hear me ramble on, but since I can't think of anything else to do, here goes.

I started out the game by establishing a game-long (or so I thought) secret alliance with France. We agreed to support each other depending on which way France and England decided to go. I tried for the longest time to work up an alliance with Turkey but couldn't get any response from him (he NR'd early), so I went with Austria. Meanwhile, R/G/E decided to equally divide up Scandinavia.

Because this was my first game I didn't have any reference point on how to play so I decided to adopt a "tit-for-tat" strategy once the initial alliances were set up. This isn't as childish as it sounds. For those interested, the strategy is exactly what it sounds like (i.e. cooperate until you're screwed) and has some basis in game theory (the May, 1983 Scientific American gives a description of it in the "Metamagical Thomas" column).

Anyway, Germany and England decided to concentrate on France. When it got to the point where France looked like he would soon go under, I stabbed Germany to honor my French alliance and tried to draw England into helping out against Germany. Jake strung me out for 2-3 moves by being non-committal. While I did all the work against Germany, England finally stepped in and picked up the majority of Germany's centers. That's a lesson I won't soon forget, Jake. France then went on to become the dominant power in the mid-game with E/R slowly pushing back England.

In the south, I played poorly against Turkey by relying on Austria's suggestions (e.g. I went for Armenia instead of maintaining the Black Sea). I think Randal played well by keeping me in a position where I couldn't hurt him yet could still help him out against Turkey. Turkey would have fallen except Austria decided to stab me in the Spring, 1904. To this day Randal maintains that it wasn't a stab. Perhaps the truth will come out in the endgame statements. So, following "tit-for-tat", I arranged an alliance with Turkey and began moving against Austria.

In the Fall, 1906, France should have been able to go on to win the game, given a little more patience. Instead, he reneged on an agreement to support me into Holland and went off on his own. I arranged a re-alliance with England against France, which continued to the end of the game.

I thought one of the most interesting parts of the game is how Germany managed to circumnavigate Europe with only one army. My forces were always needed somewhere else and I felt he couldn't do much harm to me but it sure made me uneasy the way he romped through my homeland. Oddly enough, I think that Germany's re-alliance with Russia near the end really tipped the scales in my favor. Up to that point Russia and Austria were pretty much at a stalemate. With the help of Germany's one army we were able to drive a wedge through Austrian territory and separate his forces. John, I want you to know that I fully intended to honor my agreement to get you back to Germany if the game had continued.

I only departed from the "tit-for-tat" strategy once for which I have to apologize to Turkey. When I stabbed Turkey it was only because I saw an overwhelming advantage to do so. After that, I never had the heart to eliminate him.

I'll let you veterans decide whether the strategy I used really won me the game or I was just lucky. God knows I made a number of tactical mistakes during the game, especially in the south.

Bruce, I want to congratulate you for providing us with a terrific setting for Diplomacy. I know you gave me a couple of years of fun and intrigue. I don't have much time these days to get into a game with another zine (and I'd probably be disappointed after playing in yours), but I hope that when you decide to open another game you'll include me in it.

((PEGASUS continues next page))

John MacFarlane (GERMANY): PEGASUS was my first postal game, and will be remembered forever as one of the most enjoyable. Though I suspect many of us were novices or relative newcomers to postal Diplomacy, the level of interest and enthusiasm was higher than in any other game I've played in. For Germany, the game was not successful, but proved to be an interesting experience nonetheless.

THE RISE

I shot off letters to each player the day my gamestart notice arrived. By the end of the week I had received replies to most. England's letter impressed me most and I replied with a detailed missive requesting a full-scale alliance with Russia as an equal partner, as Jake had suggested. For the next few months we wrote each other frequently and decided on a blitz of France. In the east we managed to embroil R/A in a war with Turkey, and even persuaded Italy to help our cause. I coated my letters to France with sugar and tried to deceive him into leaving Burgundy open. A good start, yes. But here is where our problems began.

Somehow France had gotten wind of the coming blitz and blocked both Burgundy and the English Channel, which stopped our assault cold. Still, Italy was in Piedmont and we figured that with a little luck, we could still take Jim down fairly fast. We never got that "little luck" we needed; Italy backed off in the erratic manner that would characterize his play throughout, and France, tactically an excellent player, fended off all of our blows.

But I got two builds, England one, and we were still in a good position to knock out France, as our Russian ally guarded our backside. About this time, France started writing heavily asking for an alliance against England, and presented a very good plan. Hindsight tells me I should have known a lost cause when I saw it, abandoned the French attack and turned on Jake. But I'm not completely without morals -- my commitment to Jake was too great, and I stuck with him till the end. So engrossed was I with the French campaign, and with trying to persuade Italy and Austria to make up so Italy could help us, that I didn't notice the ominous Russian presence in the east. Looking greedily for another target...

THE DECLINE

In Spring, 1902, Russia, not needing all six units to take on a weak Turkey, stabbed. It was actually a rather weak stab, but it served to put me off balance enough to be caught between Russia and the beleaguered France. England promised his help, but he was busy fighting France and didn't have too much force to begin with. Russia showed a lot of class in his après-stab letter, and we kept up a regular correspondence despite our enmity. Later I found that the reason Russia had stabbed was because of a game-long F/R alliance he and Jim had forged at the beginning of the game. Hindsight shows the terrible foolhardiness of telling Russia our anti-French intentions, as it was doubtless he who informed Jim of our blitz in S '01. But it was too late. The Germans dug in.

Fighting Russia was tough, especially with France sitting on my western border, ready to pounce if I left Munich or Ruhr vacant. The Russian armies kept pouring in, and I was split apart, with one unit heading up towards Finland, the rest trying to fend off the Bear. England had moved fleets into defensive support, but now saw the hopelessness of continuing the fight. Suddenly, Holland and Denmark were no longer mine, now in British hands, and Jake was no longer my ally.

In reflexion, I probably would have done the same thing Jake did had our roles been reversed. The stab brought him up to a very respectable size and he was able to lay off France temporarily and concentrate on actually gaining centers. On the other hand, it was probably rather foolish in the face of the R/F alliance. It matters little. What does matter is that I was left with a lost game. Little did I know, the fun had just begun...

((PEGASUS continues next page))

SURVIVAL

My German garrison was doomed, so I decided to go for the gusto, and sent one army from Finland to St. Pete (with England's apologetic support) and the other to Vienna. The latter I had a few moral pangs about, even though it failed, as Randal had been my friend throughout the game. But heck, it's only a game, and a dying man can be expected to get a little crazy on his last legs.

The move to St. Pete, however, succeeded admirably, and that one army, originally from Berlin, remained with me for five more game years. By a stroke of good fortune, I slipped into Moscow in 1905, laughing the whole way at Russia's frustration. The German Empire lived! In 1906 I headed down to the Ukraine, hoping for Rumania or Sevastopol in the fall. I wrote both Russia and Austria, and got the support of both into Rum! Desiring to keep up some influence on the board, I enlisted as a puppet -- oh, excuse me Mike, I mean "ally" -- in the Russian army.

From Rumania, I proceeded to take Budapest, with Russian aid this time. Mike was a benevolent "ally", and kept up a lively correspondence when other quit writing to such a purpy nation. But he was not the only one interested in my vulnerable army; Austria and Turkey also wrote often with counter-offers. Having already changed sides too often, I politely declined all.

It was at this time evident that Mike had the entire board under his control, with an English ally fighting France, and a German ally fighting Austria, and plenty of units to divide among the two fronts. England also served as a ready reservoir of supply centers if Russia got close to eighteen, and Mike kept a couple of fleets handy for just that purpose.

From Budapest I proceeded to take Serbia and was subsequently knocked out by Austria, and ended up in the figurative "gutter" of Albania. I wondered if my "ally" would come through and keep me alive despite being so close to eighteen -- he did, and supported me into Trieste like a gentleman, a true testament to his class.

By this time it was obvious who the winner was. The concession was inevitable. Congratulations, Mike.

THE PLAYERS

PEGASUS' players were more interesting, friendly, and prolific in correspondence than the players of any game I've played yet. I feel I've made some real friends in this game. Among them --

Jake Halverstadt, my first true hobby friend. Jake played very well in the opening but began to lose interest later in the game. Wrote me more than any other player (27 letters, mostly quite lengthy, and several phone calls).

Randal Husk, a real straight shooter. I probably should have taken a more active role in helping Randal when Italy was attacking him. Live and learn. Randal's diplomatic style is good; an excellent if unobtrusive flatterer.

Jim Chatfield, an excellent tactical player. Congratulations for holding out against the E/G alliance -- I wish I had listened to you a bit more carefully.

Jeff Panches, who took over a rotten position and carried it through the entire game. Despite his being a late arrival in the game and playing Turkey to my Germany, he wrote as much as any other player.

Mike Meisner, who despite some early tactical blunders, played a strategically and diplomatically brilliant game. Thanks for helping me survive, buddy. And how could I forget those delegates?

Well, it seems this rather long endgame statement has finally come to an end. I've covered a lot, but I've left out a lot more -- the T/A/G alliance which never got off the ground, the proposed convoy of an English army to Norway via a German F Nth...

((PEGASUS continues next page))

PEGASUS (continued)

Thanks to all the players for an excellent game; I hope to meet you all across the Dip board in the future. As for BRUX, well, what can I say? Just that he's not the mean old drill master everyone depicts him as. He even went to the trouble of restarting the game when a lukewarm draw passed because people forgot to vote. Thanks, BRUX, for a nearly perfectly GMed game and an excellent introduction to the PFM Dip hobby. You're one GM I'd never refuse to sign up with, and I don't care what they say. (I am not a BRUX toady, I am not a BRUX toady...)

Jeff Punches (standby for TURKEY): Turkey's goal after I took over from Mike ((Spink)) was to form an alliance with Austria against Russia and go from there. Austria played it very cagy with me while maintaining his alliance with Russia. Turkey played very conservatively as a result of the Russo-Austrian alliance. If Turkey had played a bit more boldly the Sultan's forces could have grown with the capture of Bulgaria at two points in the game. At one point a Turkish-Austrian alliance could have annihilated three Russian armies, but again Austria declined the opportunity. Late in the game Austria became a very unreliable writer and then downright stabbed me. I then decided to ally with Russia and throw all my efforts (go out) against Austria. This was a calculated gamble as I thought there was a better than 50% chance of a stab from Russia, but I thought I had little chance. Sure enough Russia stabbed me and I therefore ended the game with one unit -- one more season and Turkey would have been out of the game. ((This was written the first time the game ended, too! Oh yeah!!?)) I enjoyed the game (my first-ever completion of a PFM Diplomacy game). I particularly enjoyed the correspondence of Mike Meisner, John MacFarlane, and Jake Halverstadt.

BRUX, I hope you can get me into another game soon -- if you get a new start I would like to be in it and I am available for a standby position any time!

BRUX Lindsay (GM): This was one of the greatest bunches I've ever gotten to run a game for. Congratulations to Mike Meisner for his win, and to all the others, especially Jeff and John for hanging in there. You folks are welcome to play in VD any time!

~~~~~

## Q U A S A R

1982AE

### IS THAT CALLED THE HELGO SHUFFLE?

Fall 1910

AUSTRIA (Orloff): A ROM S A Ven, A Vie-TYO (A VEN S), A TRI S A Ven, A Gal-VIE

ENGLAND (Glaspey): F Eng-MID, A MOS H (A STP S), A LVN S GERMEN A War, A Sil-GAL,  
F Bar-NWY, A Den-HOL (F NTH C), F Hlg-DEN, F BAL H

FRANCE (Burd): A BOH S ENGLISH A Sil-Gal, A Tyo-Ven (d; r Mun, OTB), F TYR-Rom,  
A PIE S A Tyo-Ven, F LYO-Tus, F TUR-Tyr

GERMANY (Howerton): A WAR S ENGLISH A Sil-Gal, A BER H, A KIE H

ITALY (Kettman): A TUS-Pie

TURKEY (Sweeney): A SEV S A Ukr, A UKR S AUSTRIAN A Gal (OTM), A ROM S AUSTRIAN A Gal (OTM),  
A ARM S A Sev, F Hla-CON, F Eas-ION (F GRE S), F NAP S AUSTRIAN A ROM

### Supply Center Chart:

AUSTRIA: Home, Sar, Ven, ROM

6, build 1

ENGLAND: Home, Bel, Nwy, Den, Hol, StP, Swe, Mos

10, even

FRANCE: Home, Tun, Por, Spa, Mun

7, build 1

GERMANY: Kis, Ber, War

3, even

ITALY: ~~xxx~~

0, remove 1 (out)

TURKEY: Home, Bul, Gre, Rum, Sev, Nap

8, even

((QUASAR continues next page))



QUASAR (continued)

Press:

CON to ENG: Watch it! Your banners are showing -- by the by, you'll do what about Ukraine?

CON to BER/PAR/LON: FLASH! Depradations in the Ukraines calls for a movement onward to "virgin" territory -- Go west, west I say!

FRANCE to TURKEY: What are your terms?

TUSCANY: Anyone interested in an army without a country for hire?

LONDON to PARIS: I sure hope you're right...

LONDON to BERLINE: I sure hope you're right...

AUS to CON: I'm still your ally even though I never write or call. Hang in there.

CON to PAR: Did they take it (and you) to the cleaners, huh? (E.g. Ger & Eng)

CON to BER: As a friend of mine once said, "...oh my little droog, your time must surely soon end!?"

CON to BRUX: I do believe that (mine and hopefully A/H's moves) make stalemate line 4A (modified) from "Gamer's Guide".

PARIS to CON: He looks like a dog, smells like a dog, is about (almost) as smart as a dog...do you suppose?!

LONDON to TURKEY: Ver-r-r-ry inter-r-res-s-sting!

CON: Adm. General Exlax reports to the Minister of Defense in the plush suburbs of Constantinople. "Reporting as ordered, sir!" Adm. Gen. Exlax, newest leader of the combined forces, stands at attention, every inch a soldier.

"Gen. Adm. Exlax," says Minister Momentum, "take the Ionian now."

"Yes, sir!" smiles Adm. Gen. Exlax. "It shall be done!"

As he turns and leaves, the Gen. Adm. stares at the new battle standard of Turkey -- the Force Standard.

LON to WORLD: After long and careful deliberation, France has officially been declared anathema and a puppet of the Eastern powers, who practice deception and depridation! Hence an immediate and formal declaration of war is made upon that Nation and it is hoped that the Hun will aid in this, our glorious mission! Gentlebeings to arms!

PARIS to VIENNA: Your back door is open and so is mine.

TUSCANY: The last king of Italy looks forward to the abdication. He wishes his fellow regents well except for the Emperor of Austria whose deceit has brought him to this pitiful end.

CON to AUS: Told ya it'd work -- thanks Bob, now isolate Silesia -- we'll meet outside of Munich -- as agreed (or did we?).

FRANCE to ENGLAND: Make it quick and please be sure your knife is sharp.

~~~~~

R I G E L

198X

CUPCAKE CRUMBLING AS HARE HOPS EASTWARD!

Fall 1905

AUSTRIA (Knight): A BOH-Gal, A VIE-Bud (A TRI S, A SER S)

FRANCE (Hare): F ION-Aeg, F Mid-WES (F TUN S), F Wal-ENG, A BUR-Bel, A Mar-PIE

GERMANY (Heinteman): A Yor-ION, F NTH-Bel, F SKA-Nth, F DEN H, A Kie-BER,

A MUN-Boh, A TYO-Vie, A VEN-Tri, A Pie-TUS

ITALY (Ellie): F Tyr-LYO, A Rom-NAP, A APU-Ven

RUSSIA (Kleiman): A SWE S F Nwy, F NWY S A Swe, A Noa-WAR, A RUM-Ser (A BUD S),

A UKR-Gal, F SEV-Rum

TURKEY (Reilly): F CON-Aeg, F ANK-Con, F Adr-ALB, A Bul-GRE, A Arm-SMY

((RIGEL continues next page))

RIGEL (continued)

Supply Center Chart:

AUSTRIA: Vie, Tri, ~~Byd~~, Ser
 FRANCE: Home, Spa, For, Lvp, TUN
 GERMANY: Home, Hol, Dan, Bel, Ven, Edi, Lon
 ITALY: Nap, Rom, ~~Tyri~~
 RUSSIA: Home, Swe, Nwy, Rum, BUD
 TURKEY: Home, Bul, Gre

3, remove 1
 7, build 1
 9, even
 2, remove 1
 8, build 1
 5, even

Game Notes: An F/G/R draw in the game (not the press war) has been proposed. Please vote by next deadline. A F/R/I/G/A/T/E draw in the press war has been proposed. Vote on this next time if you like. Also proposed is the removal of the RIGEL game from VD to another zine, preferably The Diplomat. Please veto by next deadline (NVR = no). All votes on this 'un will be made public, per the VD Houserules.

I made a comment or two in the press, but players should be informed that I will not unconditionally print long press releases. The quality has to justify my time and space. I had no problems with last season's press, but some of what was submitted this time almost got axed. So, be warned.

Oh, there was a "yes" vote on the concession to Italy. However, there was no such proposal last season ("press" proposals and votes do not count in VD).

Press:

BRUX to RIGEL: The following press release, from Germany, was mistakenly omitted last season.

GERMANY to GM: OK, here it goes...August 16, 1948 -- Babe Ruth died; 1949 -- Margaret Mitchell (Gone with the Wind); 1956 -- Bela Lugosi; 1977 -- Elvis Presley; if anyone else knows of anyone "famous" who left this world on August 16th, 1947 or later... let me know, eh?

BRUX: Hey! What happened to the chess game?

GERMANY to BOARD: Sorry, guys, have to take a breather this turn. Will pick up the slack next time.

BRUX to GERMANY: Whatza matter? Too busy writing letters?

REILLY to ELLIS: "Filthy Garbage?!" I demand an apology. The garbage I write is good clean garbage. (And incidentally, her hair was really blonde...it just looks brown when it's wet, and it was raining that day. Also, Dave may have arranged the whole affair, but he's not stupid enough to take a chance of blowing it by sending anything less than the real thing. I mean after all, if he's got thousands of dollars to spend for stupid little press releases, he can probably afford better than a dog.))

REILLY to KLEIMAN: Ha, ha, ha...you'll never get Whiskers back! Never!

VIENNA to PARIS: Damndest A/F/I/T I've seen. Which leaves the question -- why did you want to toss your credibility out the window?

KAISER to MONACO: Soon, my friend, I'll be there to "Ty" your "Hare" into pony tails. Attacking Munich was not in our deal!

SWEENEY to BRUX: What's the name of the best game and press you've ever had in VD?

BRUX to SWEENEY: J-J-JU...RIGEL!!!!!!

REILLY to RIGEL: Sorry, no time for any lengthy press this turn. But I figure we've all written our quota for the entire game anyway. Anyone care to make peace? (Who knows, maybe BRUX would start another game if he didn't have to type all our press.)

BRUX to REILLY: I must have subconsciously known what I was doing when I opened RIGEL by itself -- it's the equivalent of a whole round of five or six games! Can you imagine if I opened six games at once and they all turned out like RIGEL??

((RIGEL continues next page))

11

RIGEL (continued)

ENGLAND'S PRIME MINISTER BOB SWEENEY to WORLD: My chains rattle as I move in the darkness. One, two, three, turn, one two three, turn; over and over again. No light, no window, no candles, only Dave coming daily (at least I think daily) to taunt, torture and extract press releases from me. Day after day after day -- I seriously doubt my sanity -- lately I've begun to hear voices and see visions. I have started to doubt my sanity. For example...

One day, who knows how long ago, a light began to shine in my cell, the glow was so bright I had to close my eyes. As the light diminished and/or my eyes adjusted to the glow -- I saw -- a dwarf outlined in light! I swear, noble reader -- a dwarf! I must surely be mad.

The dwarf smiled a wicked little laugh and then as he raised a brightly glowing finger said, "This shall be all you remember of our meeting, Prime Minister -- but remember this. Not all chess pieces are appreciated as much as you, and you are important yet in this game." There my memory ended. Crazy, huh?

Lately, I've been awakening to the sound of a voice, a hauntingly familiar voice -- Ty's voice. It talks to be this voice, it shames me, it belittles me and reminds me of past deeds. Lately, though, it's changed. It offers aid in exchange for the SECRET. It offers release of the chains, it offers to let me out, but no my precious, no my precious, we won't tell -- not for anything.

Lately, I've also seen (and even held) a small furry being, it crawled into my cell. A collar was about its neck and my finger traced the outline of its name over and over again -- finally, and at last, I feel confident that this is what it says: WHISKERS

Owner: Cupcake

Address: Yellow Brick Road, South Survival, Diplomacy 12349

The darkness is driving me mad and Dave is mad and the voices are mad and soon, soon, I must go mad. I'm tying this to the cat's collar and fervently hope that some droog will rescue me from this darkness.

SWEENEY to BRUK: I'm hoping to catch everyone off guard with this sheer mass of press this issue -- JUPITER indeed!

SWEENEY to DOOMIES IN GENERAL (AND YOU IN SPECIFIC): Has anyone else thought of alien when they've seen Dave Kleinman's face? Besides Lori?

A CANDID INTERVIEW WITH BOB SWEENEY:

Narrator: Mr. Sweeney, why are you still submitting press for RIGEL -- a game in which you were eliminated?

Sweeney: Well, it is a difficult question which actually involves more than one major reason -- rather, there are several "smaller" ones.

Narrator: Such as? -- if I might be so bold to ask.

Sweeney: Yea, you're pretty bold about it. Very well, my reasons are first, ...We in RIGEL, in order to form a more perfect hobby, have discovered that we may actually like each other -- not enough to stop lying and backstabbing, but we do swap Christmas cards (mine are in the mail). Secondly, we all have one, maybe two common factors that unite us -- first, we're Doomies and play Diplomacy -- secondly, we all love to bullshit a lot. Last but not least, to piss off BRUK.

Narrator: Huh?

Sweeney: Yeah. He started saving all that money by switching to this purple ink on bond shit and when "we" demanded a cut -- he said, and I quote, "blow it out your nose." So we in RIGEL got together and decided to fix him but good. Take for example last issue -- 32 pages of press. But he didn't save a nickel on that one, and more's to come, too.

((RIGEL continues next page))

Narrator: But isn't it going to cost you and all the other RIGEL players money? I mean, stamps, ink, paper, time, and envelopes come out of your pocket.

Sweeney: Yea, well we figure BRUX will crack soon, or his typewriter will break, or he'll start paying our bribe and we'll make up for our costs.

Narrator: Your speech brings up two interesting points. The first is, with all the press you and to a lesser extent the other RIGEL players write -- you are creating a handy publicity market for BRUX. That is to say, as RIGEL's fame spreads -- BRUX's new subscribers will increase, don't you think? (Ex: Kathy Byrne)

Sweeney: Yea! Er,...hum... yea, it would. Hey! He'd make more money than ever!

Narrator: Secondly, how much did you all want anyway?

Sweeney: \$7000 apiece for starting players and \$3000 for standbys -- after all, he must make at least \$1,000,000.00 a year...

SWEENEY to BRUX: I hope to mail 2-3 pages of prese every couple of days till deadline draws nsar -- I sure hope I catch them all with thsir drawers down! (By the by -- why don't you have the Doomies vote on who they believe is winning the preas war?) (Besides me.)

BRUX to SWEENEY: I don't mind the volume of prese so long as the quality stays high. I printed it all this time, but really, I felt there was a marked decrease in quality from last issue. If that keeps up, out comes the seldom-used but dreaded editorial blue pencil! (Or is it red?)

DEAR DOOMIE OF GOOD TASTE*:

Please vote on who you feel (not your dog -- or your wife) is winning the RIGEL press war. Place a 1 in the box of the first place individual, 2 in the second, and so on.**

1 ***	Knight, Austria	(Crazy SOB with a monitor)
	Sweeney, England	(Diplomat Extraordinaire)
	Hare, France	(Automaton)
	Heintzman, Germany	(Dwarf, beginner at chess)
	Ellis, Italy	(Captive family ****)
	Kleiman, Russia	(Into bondage &)
	Reilly, Turkey	(It's not really out of order -- if you think about it)

* What other type is there?

** On second thought -- the numbers go 1,2,3,4,5,6,7 -- for those of you on the same mental level as rocks.

*** Already filled out for your convenience.

**** Send funds to Germany -- so he'll ksep the little bastarda.

‡ Ask Lori -- by the way, Dave -- can I borrow the whip next Thursday?

Send results to BRUX by next deadline along with a 1-3 page letter explaining why this was such a great idea. If only $\frac{1}{2}$ of "us" (Doomies) respond -- we'll beat the annish.

Alao, I propose that BRUX publish his file photos of Kleiman so that we can get a concensus on his face. (No, Dave, I don't have any idea of how heavy a concensua is or how long it'll take to get it off your face -- just hold your breath -- till December.)

STP: England's Minister site quietly in his cell. It is dark for light is not allowed there. Sounds can be heard: the rattls of chains as he moves, the squeak of mice, and the rhythmic flushing of toilets. Into this moldy, musky, murky atmosphere enters a petite girl of Kansas -- Lori, and her faithful pet, Whiskers...

The door opens silently and there stands Lori in pony tails and a clean (if old-fashioned) dress. Held tightly to her bosom is the small (and slightly cyonotic) ((??)) cat -- Whiskers. "Oh Whiskers," says Lori, "where do you think he hid them?" as she

((RIGEL continues next page))

RIGEL (continued)

searches about with her flashlight. "I have to find them."

My eyes adjust to the light, I speak, "Mmphrrhh."

"Eek!" she cries, and turns to run. "Wait," I manage to croak, "have you any water -- my throat is so dry!" She stops, a puzzled look on her face, and shines the light at me and steps closer. "I don't know," she hesitates. "OK!" She releases her tight hold on the cat -- it falls to the floor with a dull thump! She kicks it against the wall where it lies gasping for breath -- second by second its color improves as it is allowed to breathe. "Now you stay there, Kitty" says Lori. "Or Momma's goin' shoot you!" Lori then pulls out a familiar weapon -- my eyes strain -- surely, it can't be! Yes, the very revolver Ty handed me in Liverpool, or was it London. My mind wanders -- how did it get here?

"Now, if you bother me -- I'll shoot." She then hands me her canteen -- sits at the bar. "Dave's hidden them, you know." "Hidden what?" I cleverly reply. "The ruby slippers, of course she yawns, and begins to sleep. "Must find it, must..."

Eagerly I crawl forward and pry the gun from her hand. I slake my thirst and think. Whiskers attempts to stand, falls, and tries again. Eventually, it ((??)) manages to crawl away. At last, I've got it!

"Lori, Whiskers is getting away!" I cry. "Hurry!" Lori awakens. "Oh no! Whiskers, where are you!?" She stands and chases after Whiskers.

Darkness returns to my cells, and I scantly believe my sanity, but one thing gives me stability when I feel I'm close to going mad. An anchor, a hope -- a revolver and a canteen -- now all I need is a break...

SWEENEY to BRUX: Ever thought of Kathy Byrne? As a press writer? OK, how about as a one-line writer?

SWEENEY to FRANCE: At last, a place to send my nasty French poems! For now, I'll repeat an original I wrote in Cheesecake, the ending ain't great but it does communicate the idea.

Kiss my fingers,
Kiss my nose...
Then I'll bend over,
And strike a pose...
Then you know, where to kiss,
You, my friend, will never miss...
So don't stand down,
You funny clown...
Just stand up (with your brow, nose...?)

Told you the ending wasn't great, but it did communicate a message.

SWEENEY to GERMANY: What do you think? Could you end this poem better?

BRUX to SWEENEY: I could write it better -- and never touch pen to paper!

SWEENEY to BRUX: Let's have a complete the poem contest to determine the best ending for the poem, OK? (Winner receives 4 free issues at BRUX's expense!) (OK, I'll pay for it.)

BRUX to SWEENEY: I'll pass on running the contest, thanks. I've credited your sub with the monsy you sent, however.

SWEENEY to RUSSIA: My daughter Christina (aged 22 months) often sits at the table with me, reaches out her pudgy little hands, grabs random pieces, and puts them wherever she likes. Slightly reminding me of your style of play...

SWEENEY to TURKEY: I've got this feeling that it is Thanksgiving. You should give thanks to A/H and R that you're still alive.

SWEENEY to WHISKERS: Where are you?

((RIGEL continues next page))

RIGEL (continued)

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SWEENEY to MADAME K.: You didn't, did you? I mean it's bad enough marrying Dave but seducing his enemies...?!

SWEENEY to ITALY: You win! You survived longer than me. You'll find a dirty diaper (from my daughter) in the mail.

A RATHER GRIM FAIRY TALE: Once upon a time there was a game called RIGEL, a very good game because the players in it were all new and energetic, and because these players wrote to each other often. This made the game very flexible, and it was an exciting game to watch in its own right, and not just because the players also happened to be very good press writers. There were stabs to be seen, and exciting shifts in the alliance structure.

But one day one of the players noticed that the game itself was no longer very exciting. It had become inflexible, and the alliances were very static. And there was, sad to say, no way to change this because the players had stopped writing to one another, and so what had once been a very intriguing game grew rather boring and became preoccupied with only the tactics of eliminating the next players in line.

Some said this was because RIGEL's press was taking too much of the players' attention; some said it was because the players were too busy with other things; others said it was because the players themselves had grown inflexible as they became veterans. But no one could figure out the exact reason, and so RIGEL lost its chance to become a truly classic game and became like most of the other games in the hobby as it dragged inexorably on to its end.

VIENNA to BERLIN: Gosh. There seems to be a direct correlation between how well one expects to do in this game and how much mail one receives from you.

ENGLAND: JUPITER.

AUSTRIA: JUPITER.

FRANCE: JUPITER.

GERMANY: JUPITER.

ITALY: JUPITER.

RUSSIA: JUPITER.

TURKEY: JUPITER.

and Italy

A STAGE SOMEWHERE IN EUROPE: England, Austria, and Turkey take their places to sing backing vocals, while France and Russia step forward into the spotlight...

France: Every turn he gives me moves to write
Since we allied from the start
I'm so proud, I am, to be the only one
Who is special in his heart
The Kaiser's mine
The doggone Kaiser's mine
I know he's mine
Because the doggone Kaiser's mine

Russia: I don't understand the way you think
Saying that he's yours, not mine
Writing letters with your silly talk
Really just a waste of time
Because he's mine
The doggone Kaiser's mine
I've got more dots than he...

Chorus: Support you anywhere...

France: But I'll help you endlessly...

Chorus: Centers we will share...

F & R: So come and take me with your solo win
But we both cannot have him

((RIGEL continues next page))

RIGEL (continued)

So it's help him or stab him
And one day you'll discover
That I'm his aide forever and ever...

Russia: Don't build your hopes to be let down
Cause I really feel it's time

France: I know he'll tell you I'm the one for him
Cause he said I toe the line
The Kaiser's mine
The doggone Kaiser's mine
Don't waste your time
Because the doggone Kaiser's mine

Russia: He's mine...

France: He's mine...

Russia: No, no, no, he's mine...

France: The Kaiser's mine...

Russia: The Kaiser's mine...

France: The Kaiser's mine...

Russia: The Kaiser's mine...

Chorus: The Kaiser's mine
Mine, mine
Yep, he's mine
Mine, mine
The Kaiser's mine
Mine, mine
Yes he's mine
Mine, mine

France: Don't waste your time
Because the doggone Kaiser's mine
The Kaiser's mine...

Russia: (spoken) Ty, we're not going to fight about this, okay?

France: Dave, I think I told you -- I'm a puppet, not a fighter.

Russia: Oh, I've heard it all before, Ty. He told me that I'm his forever ally,
you know. Don't you remember?

France: Well, after allying with me he said he couldn't ally with another.

Russia: That's what he said?

France: He said it. You keep dreaming.

Russia: (sung) I don't believe it!

Chorus: Mine, mine...

Russia: No...

France: The Kaiser's mine

Chorus: Mine, mine, mine...

France: The Kaiser's mine

Chorus: Mine, mine, mine...

Russia: He's mine, mine, mine, mine, mine

Chorus: Mine, mine, mine...

(Fade)

VIENNA to JAMES WOODSON: Thank God! At least somebody besides the players and GM
read all of this...

REILLY to RIGEL: When people start imitating you, you know you're good.

CONSTANTINOPLE to ST. PETERSBURG: You can have a Turkish ally, but no Turkish centers.

VIENNA to BRUX: How can an editor be stupid? Editors are inanimate objects, and
therefore...

((RIGEL continues next page))

RIGEL (continued)

VIENNA to WORLD: Oh, oh, boys, better ease up on the snappy one-liners. Don't want to mar the hallowed pages of VD, now, do we?

BRUX to VIENNA: Right. I hate one-line press releases.

SWERNEY to RIGEL: Any news on RIGEL II? Dave, I'm ready. Gentleman, where oh where else can we nuts write again? For we'll never meet again in a game unless we move to do it. How about it, I want a rematch! (or a rewrite) (or both).

VIENNA to MOSCOW: Don't look again, but one of us still hasn't lied to the other in this game...

VIENNA to BRUX: Blush.

VIENNA: What? No retreats?! Oh, come on -- can't we separate the seasons anyway for tradition's sake?

BRUX: No! And I hope this ungodly practice does not continue on a regular basis.

Some of you guys oughta take out your lexicons and look up the term "conditionals".

REILLY to ELLIS: I apologize: you are not a scumbunny... France is!

BRUX to REILLY: Don't you mean a scumbunny?

CONSTANTINOPOLE to VIENNA: Concede the press war to you? Surely you jest! (But perhaps I'll concede it to George Lucas...)

VIENNA to CONSTANTINOPOLE: Damn it. Rich, I seem to have misplaced the number of your Swiss bank account once again. Do you take VISA?

REILLY to RIGEL: Egad, I've just realized...I haven't read all of last season's press yet!! Guess I'd better read Press Wars before I send this...

VIENNA to BRUX: As for "i" before "e" violations, what about Tei Hare? Steve Knight? Or remember Meike Frick?

BRUX to VIENNA: Yeah, you're reight.

~~~~~

Enclosed with this issue you will find a ballot for the Don Miller Memorial Award. This is on the same sheet as the ballot for the Runestone Poll for CHing (to keep this issue from going up to the next price class postally, that's why); so be sure to detach on the dotted line. Miller Award ballots should be sent to Larry Peery, Box 8416, San Diego, CA 92102 as soon as possible (I'm not sure of the exact deadline). Vote for the candidate who you feel has given the most outstanding service to the postal Diplomacy hobby over the past year. Nominees are:

- \* Lee Kandler Sr., for his work as the Miller Number Custodian.
- \* Ronald Brown (Canada), for his work in the GDB, his help with SuperNova by steering Canadian novice requests to me, and his help with the Mensa Diplomacy SIG.
- \* Gary Coughlan, for his dedication to excellence as a gamesmaster and publisher, and for his role in bringing together hobbyists from all parts of the world.
- \* Roy Hamricks, for publishing the Zine Register.
- \* Mike Mills, for running an auction to raise money for the hobby services.

Gary Coughlan was my nominee, and VD is hereby happy to give him its endorsement. I truly feel that the British/European Diplomacy hobbies are closer to the American hobby than they were a year or two ago, and I attribute this in large part to Gary. In my opinion, postal Diplomacy has much to gain from the trans-Atlantic exchange of ideas and friendships which Gary has done so much to promote. And I right also add that he continues to publish the finest Dipsine in the hobby in the face of unfair and gutter-level attacks by certain less capable hobbyists. Gary Coughlan is my nominee for the Don Miller Award, 1984.

Whoever you wish to vote for (and there is even a space for a write-in vote on the ballot), I urge you to make your voice heard. And, I truly feel it's too bad there was room for only five nominees on the ballot as I can think of some other hobbyists who are very deserving.

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The Gossip Column

From Tom Swider:

Dear BRUX,

Just got VD...guess I better raise my dating standards?

My reaction to this issue is a bit mixed. Not being a player, nor one to read press in other games, I didn't care for all that RIGEL press. Too long for my own tastes. I much prefer the quick and to the point "thrust and riposte" Olsen-style press. Volume doesn't mean much, it's the content. Reminds me of my experiences with German 101. Our teacher would tell jokes, and since German has the verb at the end of the sentence (which could be a very long sentence), it's sort of difficult to follow. Sort of like that last sentence.

I like the cartoons Mark Paul does, though I think he forgets a few things in his rushes of enthusiasm. For example, Struggle of Nations is not a good introductory wargame. It is a good game (uses designer Kevin Zucker's Napoleon at Bay system), though it is quite complex. If you must try the game, it might be best to get Hundred Days Battle by AH. It uses virtually the same system of rules, and only costs you \$6.00. Why go blow \$20 on something you may not like? Also, Dragon Pass is very confusing. The rules tell you (for the most part) how to interpret the hieroglyphics on the counters, which include: !, \_\_, and "g". If I were to suggest a good fantasy wargame, it would be Adventure Games' Pentastar, which has some elements which are vaguely similar to Diplomacy. It's a pretty game and a fun game, which hosts two players and a diceless combat system (i.e.: an advanced version of Dip's "combat system").

Being the original hobby "Reaganite", I'd like to mention a few things about our hero, Uncle Ronnie. First of all, the problems of the poor are complex, and can't be solved in a four-year term, nor an eight-year term. This process will take a long time. Welfare programs attempt to cure the disease, instead of preventing it from happening in the first place. I'm totally against free monies.

It seems as if Jake believes that helping business isn't going to help us. Although many multi-nationals invest money and buy much of their labor via "offshore sourcing", we keep the one resource in our country that counts the most: technology. By helping create more businesses and (more importantly) creating incentives for big business to stay in the USA, Americans can find more jobs. One does not rid a cancerous growth on your hand by cutting off your arm!

And Gary Hart's big stand for the "younger high-tech" crowd seems to have their best interest in the Reagan camp. If big business is on the way up (or being supported/propped up by Reagan), that means more technical jobs. It seems so easy to poke fun at Reaganomics. Would somebody please tell me how it failed? And, Hart hasn't really impressed me with any alternatives. So, WHERE'S THE BEEF (I just had to say that...). Hart reminds me a lot of Carter. Carter was a "new face". See how well that "new face" did in office? Hart's popularity does signal the presence of the "mediocre majority" who don't give a flying shit about politics. Not all of this silence isn't due to apathy, but the presence of many conservatives who aren't really active. I hope I will be able to spend more time reading up on the important issues, though college limits that a bit.

BRUX, I agree with you 100% on school prayer, though. Let's be serious. How many school brats will want to spend time praying when they could be flirting/throwing spitballs/etc.?

Monopoly seems to be getting some attention these days. I love the excitement of setting up "Hotel Traps" (sort of like an unwanted support...). However, most of the hobby's players are surprisingly unscrupulous. Open up any copy of Everything and compare the number of wins to that of 4-way draws. Case closed.

((What? You didn't like the RIGEL press? Shame, shame!

Well, I'm still opposed to prayer in public schools despite your argument against it! (-( ))

From Ken Peol (4/5/84):

Dear Bruce:

Okay, you've got me back on board. I must admit that I was wavering, but I finally figured, why should I help Linsey line his pockets by not resubbing? Pretty clever those Bruce, sending out issues that don't even cover their own postage...

Oh yes, I've a few more words on the Wrobel/Linsey affair. I talked to Ed a couple of days ago and, as I am sure you feared, he has strong feelings about your article on why the two of you aren't feuding. In fact, in response he intends to... enjoy [it]... and squeeze this whole thing out to the last drop. Ed was pleased that you admitted being in the wrong with the ellipse expunged letter, but nevertheless, he wants...you to feel...[no] remorse. Ed, of course,...admit[s] to having made...error[s] in the past, and...intend[s] to extend to you an apology [for having cowered the once grand and free-swinging Bruker].

Well, I hope that clears everything up!

((I guess it does. Folks, the above letter is...printed in its...entire [ty], in case anyone was [pondering].))

From Dale City, VA (postmarked 4/3/84):

Pretty good! -- Anonymous

((...))

From Nelson Heintzman (3/25/84, excerpt):

Dear Bruce:

...Oh yes, I quite concur with the sentiments expressed by Samantha Krause ((??)), Jafe Halverstadt, etc., about YD's endorsement of Reagan. Good Ghod!! I'd almost rather have Nixon back in -- at least he knew how to play power politics properly on the international scene. Reagan was a B-movie actor and he's no better as President -- in my very humble opinion, of course.

((Well, you're entitled to it!))

From Joan Extrom (3/27/84 and 4/2/84):

Dear BRUX,

...Here's the \$ for the back issues. I'd buy them all if I could. Maybe someday I'll get a complete collection of YDs.

I am devoting a lot of time to the (Quotes) contest. After all, you've molded me into such a loyal, screaming Doomie that I wouldn't think of doing anything but going at it 100% -- and neglecting Samantha, Ken, the dogs, the house, my studies, my sleep. It's the very least a loyal Doomie can do. But please -- no more contests for a while!! ((See page 32, hyork, hyork! I wouldn't want you to have any excess spare time on your hands, after all.))

Ken's asking for a month of vacation (June, I think). Maybe something will work out and we'll get to see you after all.

Our next door neighbors had a fire last week that destroyed the interior of their house. Thank God they and their pets got out safely. Please remind all Doomies: if you have a fire alarm, check to make sure it's working. If you don't have one, GET ONE! They can be a hassle at times, but isn't your life worth it?

...Back to the Quotes contest. Would you believe that the other night I was actually dreaming about all those quotes? Heaven forbid!

((Aha! See what happens when one allows oneself to descend too far into the depths of Doomedom?))

From Bob Olsen (3/22/84):

Dear BRUF,

John Michalski.

Sorry I haven't written for a while...of course I was so abashed, for what could I, a poor simple-minded antelope, contribute to the important discussions of Swedish Roundabout now raging in the zine? Not much perhaps. Poor me. Actually, I confess I was a bit annoyed at being portrayed as the simple-minded stooge again, until it dawned on me how hilarious the triangles article ((Elements of Persuasion)) actually was. In fact I call for yet another S.R. article elaborating and developing the theme therein. How about an article telling exactly what the logical arguments were that when presented to that noted logician Randolph Smyth boiled down to "puppet for me and give me all your centers"? Just curious.

John Michalski.

I'm glad that you are exposing Dick Martin for what he really is, a baby-eating, swamp-dwelling, zine-bisecting, Olsenbashing troglodyte. Martin has had a brontosaurus up his navel about me for years, you know. I won't even mention how he cheated me out of a win in R-3 by throwing all my allies out of the game. And he won't give up. In fact I have checked, and my name appears somewhere in every single issue of Retaliation!

John Michalski.

I hope you were smart enough to get your revenge against Martin since he left you a perfect opportunity. Your cut-in-half copy of Retaliation would surely bring a high price indeed at the EDC auction -- I hope you offered it since I'd hate to think that you were too selfish to do so or too caught up in reading Martin's attacks on me and Olga. Well, I guess the auction list will be out soon, and we'll let history judge.

John Michalski.

You may not be aware of it but the hobby is becoming highly organized (thanks in part to the return of certain old-timers of late), dividing itself, we can only hope, into a myriad of self-aggrandizing, paranoid, snobbish cliques. With this in mind I have formed the Kansas Gaming Board, or, as some people like to call it, the KGB. The work of organization goes on apace -- I'm pleased to announce that you are part of the newly-formed New England gulag. Certain confused individuals have asked whether the KGB has plans to become a constructive organization -- the answer of course is that we are similar to our subject organization, the New York Gaming Board, in that we definitely do not plan to be constructive. Acts of terrorism, though, are not out of the question.

John Michalski.

There seems to be a great shortage of game openings these days, have you noticed? (Well, you wouldn't.) Not for me, perish the thought, but for a guy I met years ago through Flying Buffalo's Dip games, and more recently in a FIM playtest. He claims Dip as "the greatest board game ever invented" but only plays under Greg Dick... I didn't even know Dick was still around -- he was in my first Le Front game in '79. My, my, old toadies never die, do they?

John Michalski.

Oh, the reason I keep mentioning Michalski? Well, I read somewhere where Toots only skins VD these days for mentions of his name. And of course I wanted him to play close attention to the important messages contained herein. Fooled you again Michalski!

((Yes, yes, it's good that I'm exposing Dick Martin for the pimple-rinded canteloupe that he truly is. He's had a watermelon up his nostril about me for years, too.

I'm sorry, but I really don't think I ought to answer your request for an article on how Garry Hamlin and I persuaded Smyth to die. Let's just say it was brute military strength and leave it at that. And, speaking of Michalski, I was recently talking to Peery, who claimed there was nothing, hobby-wise, between San Diego and Memphis. "What about Michalski?" I asked. "You just proved my point!" he replied.))

From Dan Young (excerpts):

BRUK,

Thanks for the response and for the great issue #93 (after all, it did have my name in it 3 times!).

...Thank for the info on page 3. Yes, I was one of those who looked furiously through the issue to see if I was a standby player (omigod! If I miss my turn, I'll be thrown off the list!).

I, too, would like to congratulate the players of RIGEL. BRUK, (if you weren't losing money on this zine) you should pay these guys! ((Who, me?))

"Gaining an Ally" was very well written. I wish I could say I was happy about the results of the quiz, however (sigh).

Integrating the negotiations of my fellow players? I think not. The importance of my classes is in direct proportion to how the subject matter relates to Diplomacy or chess. Spanish is no help. (No quiero escribir las cartas en español...) Neither is Chemistry. (What makes an atom excited? Dunno. 1? supply centers?) Government is slightly better. I guess Advanced Composition is my most important class.

Besides, it all doesn't matter. I'm a high school senior going to UCLA next year, though I don't deserve to (maybe it had something to do with the extra cash I sent with my application) so all I do is read Voice of Doom and watch the girls! (No, I don't play Diplomacy during class. Before school, after school, holidays, weekends, between periods, at lunch, but never during class.)

I disagree with you on one point: up with silly one-liners!

((I would think that your chemistry teacher would heartily approve of the "Elements of Persuasion" article. Just not during class.

Glad to hear your going to my favorite school. UCLA had, of course, the finest basketball teams ever to play the game at the college level -- teams that would have put up a good, stiff fight against some of the pro teams of the time. With a Doogie there, they're a sure bet to regain their stardom, right?

Glad to hear you liked "Gaining an Ally". Sometimes I wonder if anyone actually reads my strategy articles (they garner very little in the way of response), but so long as you'll read 'em, I'll continue to write 'em.

Quiz results? Well, sorry. Maybe you'll have better luck in this issue's contest.))

From John MacFarlane (4/1/84):

Dear BRUK,

Enclosed please find my PEGASUS endgame statement and my entry for your Quote Contest. The contest was interesting; I had a lot of fun doing it. Looking forward to seeing the results.

The last few issues of VD have been very good. It seems you've regained the "flavor" -- a lighthearted, humorous mood -- that I noticed in early issues of VD and that disappeared during the Coughlan-Martin feud. The RIGEL press is incredible (and quite enjoyable!). How do those guys do it?

Well, personally, I hugely enjoyed your play "Roll Over BeethovenCon". Peery's a tolerant guy and can take some josting. As an avid Beatles fan, I found your arrangements of the songs quite humorous.

I support your side of the ombudsman issue. No one has to sign up to play in VD -- those who do, by doing so, are demonstrating their confidence in your common sense (you've already proven that you will call an ombudsman in reasonable and even slightly unreasonable cases). That's enough "peace of mind" for me. In fact, I'd rather have the assurance that the game won't be delayed by some joker with a grudge against you than the assurance of right to appeal. I say this, of course, knowing that if I have a legitimate disagreement, you will call an ombudsman.

Glad to see Mark Paul's cartoons back.

Darcimonorously,  
John

((Thanks for a nice letter. I hope Mark Borch and Kathy Byrne read the part of it about ombudemen. I remain quietly confident that most of my players feel as you do: that my judgement is good enough for them. Of course, as you say, any legitimate disputes go to arbitration here.

"Lighthearted"? Well, I'll certainly try to keep things that way! At the moment, my ventricles are just full of helium...))

From Ed Wrobel (excerpt):

...I see from your "Ed's favorite" issue that you are getting desperate for headlines...

Is your big surprise (a) you are getting married (b) you are coming out of the closet (c) you are folding Voice of Doom (d) you got a new dog?

What other great issues can we get together and stimulate discussion of?...

((None, just yet. Let's milk the Double Orders and the Expunged Ellipses for all they're worth first.))

From Mark Borch (3/11/84, excerpt):

Dear Bruce,

Your PeerPlay was fantastic, a classic of hobby satire and humor, one of the cleverst things you've ever done. It ranks up there with the Caruso/Byrne parody of the DipCon booklet done in 1982, and Pearson's "Diplomacy World #31a". Your "Dipinaster" piece, however, I don't think really clicked. Elements of Persuasion was also very well done, in a difficult area to write about.

((At last, I have it. "Roll Over BeethovenCon" has now received the official stamp of the Dipinaster's approval, so all criticisms of it are rendered invalid.

You're right, the "Pilgrim and Dipinaster" article wasn't quite up to the quality of some others, including yours and Olson's earlier installments in the series. Well, we try...))

From Ronald Brown (4/5/84, excerpt):

Dear Bruce,

...Re my comments in VD no. 93 about you knowing the Rulebook better than anyone else in the hobby: I never suggested you said that. That's entirely my statement. I've read enough over the past five years on rules discussions and feuds to know whereof I speak.

Thanks for the kind comments re Snafu!. If I knew my fold announcement was going to get this kind of reception, I'd have folded long ago. ☺

((A pity, isn't it, that some publishers never know how much their zine was enjoyed till it folds? (Sort of like real life, eh?) Well, then, I'm glad you didn't know it would get this kind of reception...))

From Rich Bailly (4/9/84):

Dear BRUK,

Just time for a quick note: I objected to Ed Wrobel's letter because as far as I could tell Ed was really angry with you, and was trying to show me and everyone else what a terrible person you are. Ed's letter did not seem the least bit humorous when I read it. In fact, I found it a little bit upsetting...and that is why I objected to it. In any case, I'm glad to know that there is not, in fact, any

"bitter conflict" between you and Ed. I hope all's well...

PS. Incidentally, I prefer the way you present letters.

((Yeah, me too. Also incidentally, the last few letters have appeared rather European in style: kind of chopped up, no? But this is just the way they worked out -- I'm not changing my policies; I just got a lot of short letters this month.

If Ed's letter was intended to demonstrate what a terrible person I am, then wasn't it a classic example of preaching to the converted?))

From Joan (4/6/84):

Dear BRUK,

Here -- finally -- is my contest entry. I'll be pissed if I don't win anything at all. With the money (\$7.25 for back issues) and time (average of about 2 hours per day for several weeks) I invested, I should at least get third place. I read each issue thru carefully at least once. (My GHOD, Bruce, controversy by issue #34 -- I mean, REALLY!) Good thing I'm a bored homemaker with plenty of time to kill. It was a great contest, lots of fun, and if I won anything -- I deserve it!!!

Funny how about 90% of my guesses at who said what proved to be wrong as I read thru the issue.

Just a few things you failed to mention in explaining the contest:

- 1) Do we lose points for misspelling? ((Sorry, Joan, I couldn't resist!))
  - 2) What time is the deadline? I'll be calling in my final guesses.
  - 3) "Sign your name" -- does that have to be our full legal signature, as opposed to just writing or typing our name?
  - 4) If we send in more than one entry, and they're not dated, do you use only the answers common to both?
  - 5) Will deception of the judge be permitted?
  - 6) Do we have to write out full names or do you accept abbreviations?
    - a) Do you have a list of acceptable abbreviations?
    - b) Is "Tro" an acceptable abbreviation for "Keith Sherwood"? Or is it ambiguous?...uh...oh...he wasn't quoted...
  - 7) Can I concede to someone with fewer correct answers than me or would that take a vote of all entrants? And does NVR = yee or no?
  - 8) Can my answers hold but support someone else's answers?
  - 9) If I ask you not to print my answers, will you honor the confidentiality?
- Or do I sound like a broken record?

You really need house rules to cover these points, Bruce.

PS. If I don't win, I'll take you to an ombudsman!

((You just might! See the contest results.

I've never understood why some people seem to think that recreational activities require a long set of rules. We don't need dozens of silly, hypocritical house rules to run a simple Dippy contest -- I'll just use my common sense! (Well, and look what really happened...))

From Ruth Glaspey (4/9/84):

Dear BRUK,

Gee -- you're right! There are a lot of folks in the RIGEL game who are flouting the "i before e" rule. Weird, isn't it? Either they should declare themselves to be foreigners who are ignorant of our traditions, or they should be seized and prosecuted. Such feisty sleight-of-hand with the language is intolerable! It is the height of arrogance! A seismic wave of reaction and indignation ought to sweep the English-speaking countries.



Haha -- lunch hour's nearly over. I must resume my purchasing duties and leave off this leisure activity. Let's see...what have I missed? Eidetio, heifer, casein, elsteddfod, weik, heist...

((Thanks for a clever letter. Surely you realize that we must expect occasional slipups in the rules of grammar from even the smartest people. To avoid them totally would require an Einstein.))

From Pat Pakel (4/12/84):

Dear Bruce,

Hi! Enclosed, you lucky guy, you should find \$5.00 for ten more issues. Just think, Bruce -- I had to pick up 100 cans in order to pay for your zine! Doesn't that make you feel just awful? Yes, I know, of course it does...

Also enclosed is the picture of me that you asked for many and many a year ago. As you can see, I am (as usual) hard at work mowing the lawn. Although the picture was taken a few years ago, I haven't changed a bit...

Well, Bruce, how do you do it? How can you regularly put out a 30+ page magazine, chock full of interesting stuff? I can't even find the time or energy to scrape together a 5-page report for school! C'mon Bruce, you can tell me your secret -- is it a new drug? Oh, I see. Of course, it's your natural drive and ambition -- what else could you expect from someone who jogs 500 miles a day? I guess all I can say is, "Keep it up!"

I think that you should run a game for the worst players in the hobby. The real bottom of the barrel! Of course, there would be the question of who is allowed to play in the game. Perhaps you could run a poll to determine the hobby's worst players? C'mon, there are polls to determine the best players, so why not go for the worst players? Go for it, Bruce! Add a new dimension to the hobby...

I guess that's all I'm going to write. Chow, and have fun!!

Best wishes,  
P

((Hey, how's about a nice, lighthearted letter like this to finish off the letter column, hey? OK, folks, you tell me. Who are the very worst players in the Diplomacy hobby? VD wants to know.

Thanks, Pat, for the picture of you mowing your lawn in diapers. Of course, you've aged a year or two since then, but the resemblance is definitely there. And, I'm still collecting pictures from Dummies I haven't met (other than those who have already sent them in, and Charde Edison, whose picture I no longer want!).

Well, with all the cans I kick around here in VD, there should be a few hundred lying around for you to pick up!))

~~~~~

I just had the pleasure of meeting Simon Billonness, who was in Albany visiting his fiancée Barbara Passoff (that explains why I wasn't reachable by phone this deadline Friday). Simon is from England, and he is the first overseas hobbyist I'd ever met. Simon and Barbara are a delightful couple and VD extends its congratulations and best wishes to them. And, Simon is now a Doodle, since we've agreed to trade Voice of Doom and Inflammatory Material. I learned a lot about the British hobby from talking with Simon. They have no feuds and no zines which run only Diplomacy. Pete Birks, whom I had pictured as an older, conservative sort of fellow, is a feisty little character who likes to fight. Glover Rogerson is not the wild, red-headed chap I'd pictured, but rather a laid-back, conservative-looking gentleman. Simon himself is much younger than I'd thought, and very knowledgeable about both hobby and non-hobby matters. The British view Michalski as some kind of monster and have about the same opinion of Highfield and The Modern Idiot as do most American hobbyists. It was really great getting to meet them. See you this summer, Barbara and Simon!

Aha! So That's Who Said 'Em!

The "2000 Pages of Juicy Quotes" contest is over. Before announcing the winner, here is the solution. The number after each person's name is the issue in which he or she made the quote.

1. "When you bite into that sandwich, think about Flipper." Brian Orloff, 72
2. "Germans never could hold their vodka!!!!!!" Larry Lansing, 67
3. "Is some secret mastermind attempting to gain control of the Hobby through this immensely popular game?" Pete Tamlyn, 85
4. "Know how to get to Texas? You walk west until you smell it, then go south until you step in it, and you're there!" John Michalski, 5
5. "Their grandiose, conflictual, and arbitrary comments have no place in a magazine devoted to a hobby." Mike Kettman, 86
6. "'French Fucked' is more acceptable as a headline for a game report than 'Frogs Eliminated!'" Ronald Brown (Can.), 79
7. "When I peaked into my letter-box, I spied in awe one lonely little envelope. I opened it with trembling fingers...after all, it was my first communication with the outside world in 42 days...and...aarrgh!" Ralph Morton, 52
8. "Dear Bruce, This is not a letter, so don't get surprised." Steve Angle, 82
9. "Of course, there would have to be some way to keep people from cheating, I suppose. (Or do Diplomacy players ever cheat? Maybe they don't.) Randal Musk, 66
10. "...if you can't trust anyone until he 'proves himself' then you probably shouldn't be playing the game. Given the option, though, I'd rather not." John MacFarlane, 68
11. "...why is it that the winner of America's Junior Miss pageant always breaks down in tears -- and the runner-up doesn't even sniffle?" Don Del Grande, 63
12. "...he sneakily knocked five players out of contention at DipCon. That would have been great except that I was one of the 'Hobby Alarm Clock's' victims." James Wall, 90
13. "I am not in favor of destroying the world, I just don't want to let the fascists take over and I will do anything to prevent that from happening." Ben Schilling, 76
14. "Be friendly, courteous, concerned; but most of all NOT STUPID." Edmund Jedry, 83
15. "...like a chameleon changing the color of his horses in midstream." Ruth Glaspey, 78
16. "Today I sat on my talk-chair." Ivo Bouwman, 89
17. "Gadzooks! Do you mean there are postal Diplomacy players who don't know the meaning of 'Klaatu Biroda Nikto'?" Fred Davis, 31
18. "Yes, I think that Doomie should be in the Lexicon." John Davies, 28
19. "I've got a six inch high Nixon doll. When you wind him up, he raises his arm and flashes peace signs, all the while frowning and saying, 'My fellow Americans, let me make this perfectly clear', at which point an evil grin spreads across his face and he flips a pair of birds at his imaginary audience." Pat Conlon, 37
20. "I like to play against people I like. If you're gonna get beat it's a helluva lot better to get beat from a friend...than from somebody you don't like." Nelson Heintzman, 87
21. "...I must say that to an outsider and a novice you all seem a bit on the 'weird' side. I wonder if other newcomers have the same impression?" Mike Meisner, 58
22. "It is like asking a drug addict to take a vacation away from heroin for a month. The addiction of postal Diplomacy is just too strong for many people (and most publishers) to overcome -- until they overdose." Doug Beyerlein, 54
23. "Steve Knight has no time to fuck because he's so busy with the houserule." Joan Extrom, 82
24. "I suspect that your houserules ceased to have any relevance long ago and you are now just playing this thing as a game." Geoff Challenger, 79

25. "I've had dinner with Ronald and Nancy Reagan, tossed down cocktails with Ed Asner, even watered the weeds (so to speak) with Howard Baker and John Brodie." Jake Halversadt, 59
26. "You would have to trudge through an entire petrified forest of deadwood before finding wood as dead as me." Steve Hutton, 90
27. "I'm sure it is very easy to get you drunk -- VOD usually reads like you are!" John Marsden, 12
28. "I'd like to thank my saintly grey-haired mother, who worked her fingers to the bone so that I could get my Masters degree in physics so that I would have the requisite skills to take three hour lunches to get my press and letters in the mail." Mike Mazzer, 34
29. "We're all going broke! Who's getting our money?" Porter Wightman, 85
30. "How much more efficient the Nazis could have made their final solution to the 'Jewish Problem' had they been able to sift those widely scattered and non-integrated public records via computer rather than relying on manual record checks." Rick Ragsdale, 81
31. "I don't think I'll write a conclusion for this. I love leaving things unsaid almost as much as I love nonsequiturs." Richard Edison, 76
32. "Poor little BRUXie, he wants a letter from me. He gets letters from all kinds of Doonies and he still wants one from me." Cathy Canning, 70
33. "It's been reported so cold that a person talking outside had the words come out as solid chunks of ice. These had to be melted in a frying pan over a fire before anyone knew what the person said." Rob Lowes, 90
34. "How come the only place where you can play a serious game of darts is at a pub, but at a pub nobody is in any condition to play a serious game of darts..." Mark Paul, 63
35. "Visions started appearing in my head of someone taping a big sign on my back reading 'I'M NEW HERE, STAB ME' just after I draw Italy against Bircean, Kendter, Byrne, Masters, Buchanan, and Ditter." Steve Knight, 83
36. "Sorry I put that so badly, sentence-structure-wise." Konrad Baumeister, 65
37. "Cut down a little on the gossip, and get Alex back! (Why do you think I took out a sub -- I'm gonna sue!)" Pat Pakel, 85
38. "...my religion forbids me to attack a fellow Moslem country like Turkey." Dave Perlmutter, 3
39. "...you would like to hear from your VD black holes. That is, the people you never get letters from. I guess you now have one less black hole." Matt Fleming, 86
40. "Maybe you'd prefer not to worry about the problem of negotiating with a guy who might print anything (everything?) in his zine and decide to try and eliminate him as soon as possible? I wonder...But I don't think I'd be brave enough to try it." Ron Brown (Cal.), 81
41. "Please find enclosed a small sample of dung from my last visit to the stables." Bob Sweeney, 85
42. "So John Boardman, our favorite self-styled liberal, has now decided that divorce, Catholicism, and homosexuality are not 'moral'." Peter Ansoff, 7
43. "...never give your orders out until you have the zins in your hand! Never write that, 'Gee, Joe, really sorry about the stab' until you see the zine." Jim Meinel, 82
44. "Austria can now be reached in the 'murdered' section of the county cemetery, and I, your trusty GM, now reside in the state penitentiary for life." BRUX Linsey, 1 ((No, this didn't refer to the BLACK HOLE Affair!))
45. "My twenty years in the US Army was as an intelligence agent, where deceit, ruses, misinformation, lies, etc., were stock in trade. Such a career prepares one very little for civilian life, except for playing Diplomacy or marketing." Bob Howerton, 59

46. "We moved back to the old place last month, and it wasn't long before I came across all the old Dipzinee, and all the old memories came flooding back. I realized then what the ache was, the emptiness deep inside. I miss all you Diplomacy people." Jim Chatfield, 56
47. "...under the hobby's collective door has crept a viper. A cancer. A blot upon the face of the world." Glover Rogerson, 85
48. "I might as well have you jump on my body politic...the mistakes I make...oh my god...I'll write later...I'm shattered now...mumbling to myself..." Mark Duarte, 67
49. "It is incredible and almost impossible to describe the transformation BRUX undergoes in Alex's presence. From being a calm, normal (?), rational, sophisticated human (!) being, he becomes a screaming, wild fanatic!" Eric Kane, 71
50. "...it had to be a bomb, either sent by Rusnak or Manzer, through you. Well, I wasn't to be fooled, so I had my sister open it." Jim Makuc, 85
51. "...we plan to take things easy when we travel. We will journey from Virginia to Colorado by bicycle..." Paul Rauterberg, 14
52. "A cat will sit on your lap, cuddle up to you, rub against your leg, let you feed it and pet it; then when you are gone it will rip up the couch, climb up the drapes and eat the candles. This is what Diplomacy is all about." Dick Astron, 31
53. "...I miss the enjoyment of watching the other fellow squirm as he dies -- the squirms just don't come through the mail -- something is lost." Jeff Albrecht, 64
54. "...the worst of the bunch are those actually with some degree of geniality, but whose ingenuity, uncoupled with any shred of common sense, lends them the illusion of competence that makes them a threat to all around them." Garry Hamlin, 60
55. "My poor, rest her soul, grandmother won't be getting a tombstone, but that's all right, she doesn't really need one. And who cares if my baby brother doesn't have anything to eat? Here, have your lousy money, Scrooge!" Michael Ditz, 76
56. "15 year old girls writing columns? Bill Highfield only 12 years old? This is all one of your gigantic hoaxes, isn't it, Linsey?" Pete Birke, 79
57. "I cannot vote on Ty's face, as I do not have a copy of his face on which to inscribe my vote." Dave Kleiman, 87
58. "My grandfather was a claims adjuster and could tell some ridiculous stories, Would you believe a can of Red Whip that flew out of a woman's hand and around the room and wrecked the old wallpaper she was tired of?" Jim Finley, 59
59. "Has anybody given any thought as to what would happen to the hobby if Ron Kelly lost interest in Diplomacy and MWRd in all his games? It might even be considered a case for Federal emergency relief funds..." Dave Carter, 27
60. "Let me tell you about BRUX in a face-to-face Diplomacy game! He never seems sincere, you feel he's always feeding you a line, he looks shifty, he won't be specific, he's evasive and slippery. Consequently, since we were exact opposites, we were enemies." Gary Coughlan, 50
61. "Have you been smoking hashish again or is the Tsar plying you with vodka or did you just lose your mind?" Don Burd, 69
62. "I may end up an in-name-only homosexual someday. Not for the purpose of sex (shudder), but because that seems to be about the only community that would accept me for what I am, emotions and all." John Kelley, 12
63. "...it is awfully generous of you to take Turkey to my Germany. At last, at long last, I'll get through 1901 without you stabbing me." *** NOBODY! ***
64. "Is Alex Lord really a pseudonym for Kathy Byrne?" Greg Ellis, 76
65. "Puppies are great for cheering people up. They don't care about anything, but they will love you for no reason at all. It is a cold person who can resist the attentions of a tail-wagging, face-licking, excited little puppy." Jim Williams, 63

66. "The game is a simulation. But the problem with simulations is it's like masturbation, if you do it long enough, you get fooled into thinking it's the real thing." Judy Winsome, 69
67. "I'm from Ohio. Small town called Huron. Only good thing about it was that we were only a block from Lake Erie, so I got to go swimming in the filth and muck a lot." Richard Reilly, 77
68. "Thanks for the sand. It made me feel closer to New York." Mark Frush, 85
69. "...I decided to form my own little group which served no particular purpose; sort of like the I.D.A., for those of you who are familiar with Robert Sacks." Tom Swider, 30
70. "BRUK writes: '...it literally scintillates with enthusiasm!' My issue must be defective. Even with the lights off it doesn't scintillate." John Kador, 45
71. "I'm not certain where I sent my taxes, in the form of a cashier's check for \$235.47, but the latest Voice of Doom says my sub expires with issue #6,423." Andy Liscett, 4
72. "And now in honor of your victory, I'd like everyone to join me in a chorus of, 'My Land is Your Land'." Rob Schunk, 86
73. "...the odd dollar for a copy of your house rules. Don't worry, I don't want them for ridicule, nor to drop on my neighbor's dog, whose head nevertheless deserves crushing in such a manner." Marc Peters, 85
74. "...melting your corpses into many plastic Diplomacy pieces to be played with by countless unsuspecting game enthusiasts." Ty Hare, 76
75. "With the type of people that belong to this hobby and their various feuds and disputations we will literally have a contest to see who can turn in their adversary before he himself is turned in. Within a year we would have a dissolved hobby." Brian Lorber, 54
76. "There were no Dip players for miles around. I couldn't handle it. I began to suffer from dizziness and nausea. My palms were always sweaty. Little wooden blocks would attack me in my dreams." Jeff Noto, 44
77. "Some people pump quarters into video games, others collect stamps, and some like us play Diplomacy. It's really just a case of whatever floats your boat." Kevin Stone, 68
78. "Bruce is a fun guy if you know how to handle him. After all any person who would obey my command to get down on all fours and eat cat food out of my cat's dish has to be an obedient, crazy, fun guy. Well, Bruce does have a thing for cats..." Alex Lord, 69
79. "...your internal conflicts so transcend your inherent capacity to mentally evaluate situations in a rational context that you must submerge these aberrant expressions of inanity in irrationally conceived pseudo-personalities?" Gerry Thompson, 65
80. "The day Nixon resigned was my proudest day as an American." Bob Olsen, 10
81. "Now, if you would like to get in on the fraud, just send a check or money order to FRAUD and for as little as \$20/mo. you can sponsor a 'student'." John Pack, 51
82. "Being 64 years old does not exempt one from being a petulant, ill-mannered child." Rod Walker, 5
83. "So, Bruce, if I ever catch you talking down to someone without due cause, I'll not only cancel my sub, but I'll personally fly to New York and beat the ever-lovin', livin', piss out of you!" Bob Osuch, 23
84. "Alex Lord's Science Fair project is a blue-ribbon winner: from a few whiskers that she found in her backyard she has managed to clone an entirely new Bruce Liney! The medical world is all agog, but Ig Lew is pissed." Chuff Afflerbach, 70
85. "It's a really incredible experience to go swimming amongst the kelp forests, surrounded by beautiful fish and plants, and an occasional playful seal, two of which came over and followed us around. (Hey Martha! Look! People!)" Rob Wittmond, 64

86. "You mean I didn't lose my virginity until I came to Mississippi?! Eight years of ecstasy are imaginary?!" George Leritte, 9
87. "A CM judgement call might be best. That leaves the door open for lots of hassle and bad feelings, if there are soreheads in the game. No soreheads allowed in VD games, so that shouldn't be a problem, right?" Steve Langley, 57
88. "...in the interest of modesty and good taste, I suggest that you cover your Brest." Jane Proskin, 52
89. "Ally wanted -- all you need to know is the difference between your ass and your elbow." Kathy Byrne, 6
90. "...in most settings, I resort to colloquialisms, sentence fragments, freeform train-of-thought writing, and vulgarity. I speak and write in the manner most easily understood by my audience of the moment..." Mike Barno, 59
91. "This has been a bad season for me, the piano movers dropped a piano on my car, my wife left me for a one-legged midget, I put a spoon into the microwave and burned up my kitchen, I had all my money in the Braniff stock, and I lost my job with Ig Low Incorporated. All I have left is this game -- please don't end it now." Jeff Panches, 64
92. "Like, suppose you were having dinner with the mayor, and right in the middle of it all you cut loose with a loud, fruity fart." Randolph Smyth, 70
93. "Should the player's intent indeed be clear, how might the gamesmaster -- in good conscience -- smite not only the sense of the observer but the player himself betwixt the scapulae?" Ed Wrobel, 66
94. "The bad news is that I think I'm pregnant. The good news is that I don't think the baby's mine." Mark Johnson, 9
95. "Imagine someone coming up to you on a sunny afternoon and asking you, 'Could I interest you in becoming a Fuller brush?' How would you react? Would you dance and sing with joy at the realization of a lifelong dream?" Mark Luedi, 68
96. "My leg comes off next Monday. I can't wait." James Woodson, 79
97. "...Turkey's letter actually pulled itself out of my trashcan, wafted onto the desk, pulled my orders out of the envelope, unfolded them, wrapped themselves around a pen, and CHANGED THE ORDERS!!!" Mark Berch, 3
98. "Most publishers will give a person a free issue if there's any juicy gossip about him therein. So all I have to do is arrange a scandal about myself and I get a whole bunch of free zines." Mark Lew, 24
99. "I think you like to be unfair for fun sometimes, but it backfires. What a pain in the a-- you are, ERUK." Eric Ozog, 85
100. "...here is this guy that has Bruce on the ropes, humbled beyond belief. And what does he do? Not only lets ERUK off the hook, but gives him a reason for self-righteous indignation that will last for 50 Dappy years." Kerry Blant, 34

THE RESULTS: Um, controversy, I'm afraid. Steve Langley wins with a score of 73. Daf Langley had the second-place entry with 68. Joan Extrom was third with 67. John MacFarlane was fourth with 60. Chuff Afflerbach had 55, James Woodson 44, Steve Knight's entry arrived a day late with 26 points, Dave Carter had 11, and Brian Lorber finished with a whopping score of -4.

I am inclined to disallow Daf's as the second place entry as it seems unfair that a husband and wife should be able to collect the issues for both first and second place. However, they both are Doomies (they share a sub) and both eligible to enter -- I just don't know that they're both eligible to win (I mean, heck, what if one of the kids had submitted an entry too, and taken third place?).

So, Steve wins the top prize of 15 issues, and I'll reserve judgement until I hear the opinions of the readership on whether Daf should take second place.

Also, John MacFarlane neglected to sign his entry, which means that if both Daf's and his ballots are disallowed, Chuff would take third place. (I did say that entries should be signed, but I am also sure that it's John's entry. Under those circumstances, I would allow it as a set of game orders, eg) So, help me, Doomies! What should I do with this mess?!

The Lists of Doom

Many people have a fascination with lists, and Doomies (including the ol' BRUXer) are no exception. So without further ado, here are The Lists of Doom.

The 10 Best Issues of VD (from the top down)

1. #85
2. #90
3. #66
4. #93
5. #70
6. #64
7. #60
8. #76
9. #57
10. #61

The 10 Worst Issues of VD (from the bottom up)

1. #22
2. #13
3. #11
4. #43
5. #34
6. #44
7. #53
8. #84
9. #36
10. #38

The 10 Most Successful Players in VD History

1. Ron Brown
2. Mike Meisner
3. Eric Kane
4. Dave Glaman
5. Paul Rauterberg
6. Bob Olsen
7. Mike Mazzer
8. George Leritte
9. Peter Ansoff
10. Robert Roaldi

BRUX's 10 Best Hoaxes

1. The Browns Bulletin #69 -- all sorts of people contributed.
2. Dip Digest #42 -- the Fake Zine Theme Issue.
3. The "Frank DeLalla" letter in VD #60 -- it fooled Alex into thinking BRUX was a lovable little boy!
4. The SIRIUS game -- who took it SIRIUSly?
5. "Jane Proskin", a fake name later pilated and tainted by Jack Masters when he used it to steal people's subscription money.
6. The "Tro" letter in VD #33 -- a phony letter of admission from "Tro" Sherwood, written by BRUX with Tro's permission.
7. The "Cat's Head" Whitestonia -- the best imitation of a zine I have ever done, but in poor taste given my feud with the real editors at the time.
8. The Origins Beer Blast in Detroit. Who ever heard of a beer blast without beer?
9. "Ted Sommer" -- the most obnoxious little twerp this side of Rochester.
10. The "Kit Carson" fake letter in VD #48. Really, BRUX, a fake school?

The 20 Charter Doomies, Loyal Subbers Since the First Issue of VD

1. Jeff Albrecht
2. Peter Ansoff
3. Kourad Baumeister
4. Mark Berch
5. Dave Carter
6. John Davies *
7. Fred Davis
8. Mark Johnson
9. Mike Jones
10. John Kador
11. George Leritte
12. Andy Lindsett
13. John Michalecki
14. Ralph Morton
15. Bob Olsen
16. Rick Ragdale
17. Paul Rauterberg
18. Ben Schilling
19. Randolph Sayth
20. Rod Walker

The 10 Farthest-Away Doomies I Have Met

1. Ty Hare (CA)
2. Doug Beyerlein (CA)
3. Cathy Cuning (WA)
4. Rod Walker (CA)
5. James Woodson (CA)
6. Mike Mazzer (CA)
7. Mark Johnson (TX)
8. Bob Olsen (KS)
9. Gary Coughlan (TN)
10. Jim Williams (IA)

10 Doomies I've Never Met -- But Who I Feel I've Known Well for Years!

1. Joan Extrom
2. Ruth Glaspey
3. Jake Halverstadt
4. Nelson Heintzman
5. John Kelley
6. Steve Langley
7. George Leritte
8. John Michalecki
9. Jeff Noto
10. Flumphier T. Quiddipoo

The 7 Semi-charter Doomies: Subbers at the Beginning and Subbers Now, but not with us all along

1. Pete Birk
2. Kathy Ryne
3. Jim Chatfield
4. Gary Coughlan
5. John Kelley
6. John Marsden
7. Tom Swider

* if he renews -- sub expired with #92

10 Zines Which Have Reprinted Articles From VD

1. The Baltic Battler
2. Bruxus Bulletin
3. Diplomacy Digest
4. Diplomacy World
5. Enchain Macha
6. The Flying Dutchman
7. The Modern Patriot
8. Supernova
9. Variants and Uncles
10. Winsome Losesome

10 Zines Which Have Had Articles Reprinted in VD

1. The Acolyte
2. The Baltic Battler
3. Bruxus Bulletin
4. Denver Glont
5. Diplomacy Digest
6. EFGIART
7. Fol Si Fie
8. High Plains Gonzo
9. Hoof and Mouth
10. Whitestonia

BRUX's 10 Most Controversial Actions or Decisions

1. BLACK HOLE Affair ##
 2. "Tro" Affair ##
 3. Ed Wrobel's Double Orders ##
 4. Printing Barno Letter, VD #72 *
 5. Exposé of Masters Plagiarism ##
 6. Expunging Ellipses from Wrobel's letter, VD #89 *
 7. Blasting Woody ##
 8. Restarting MILKY WAY and PEGASUS ##
 9. SIRIUS Decision **
 10. ECLIPSE Flying Dutchman #
- * BRUX acted improperly
 ** BRUX's action would have been improper had it not been a hoax
 # BRUX made a gross error, but given that, acted properly
 ## BRUX acted entirely properly

10 Most Responded-to Articles or Events in VD History (the first issue, reader polls, and gamestart announcements are not included)

1. Alex's Column on Hunting (VD #68)
2. "Tro" Affair
3. Off the Record! (VD #66)
4. BLACK HOLE Affair
5. 1983 Dooms of the Year Contest (VD #86)
6. Wrobel Affair (Double-ordered units)
7. Gamesmasters and the Telephone (VD #79, by Jim Meinel and BRUX Linsey)
8. Dave White's letter in VD #5, blasting BRUX for printing controversial material
9. Controversy Editorial (VD #74)
10. A Rulebook Quiz (VD #23)

10 Doomsies Who Have Spent the Most Time Talking on the Phone with BRUX

1. Kathy Byrne
2. George Leritte
3. Gary Coughlan
4. Alex Lord
5. Joan Extrom
6. Mike Barno
7. Mark Berch
8. Steve Knight
9. Eric Kane
10. John Kelley

10 Most Prominent and Influential Women in VD's History

1. Alex Lord
2. Joan Extrom
3. Trouble Linsey
4. Ruth Glaspey
5. Kathy Byrne
6. Judy Linsey
7. Samantha Corbin
8. "Jane Proskin"
9. Debbie Lord
10. Linda Simpson

14 Hobby Records Held by VD (or at least BRUX thinks they are!)

- | | |
|--|--|
| 1. Longest Issue (170 pages) | 10. Most Pages in a Year (682 in 1983) |
| 2. Longest Press Release (11 pages) | 11. Most Full-Sized Issues on Consecutive Weeks (19 big 'uns!) |
| 3. Longest Press Section for a Game (32+ pages) | 12. Most Money Lost on One Issue (<u>VD</u> #66 had a net loss of over \$300) |
| 4. Longest Letter Column in One Issue (46 pages) | 13. Most Wonderful Sub List of All Time (subjective, but who would argue?!) |
| 5. Longest Letter Column, All Time (700+ pages) | 14. Most Egotistical Editor of All Time |
| 6. Most Contributors to an Issue (67 + editor) | |
| 7. Most Free Samples of an Issue (almost 700) | |
| 8. Longest House Rules (19 pages) | |
| 9. Most Gamestarts in One Batch (6, twice) | |

15 Doomes Who Have Had the Most Positive Influence on VD. (If there were a Hall of Fame for Doomes, these people would all be shoo-ins!)

- | | |
|-------------------------|---------------------|
| 1. BRUX Linsey | 8. Gary Coughlan |
| 2. Alex Lord | 9. Rod Walker |
| 3. Mark Berch | 10. John Kador |
| 4. Bob Olsen | 11. Mark Paul |
| 5. Steve Knight | 12. Pat Conlon |
| 6. Mike Barno | 13. Garry Hamlin |
| 7. Joan Extrom | 14. Paul Rautenberg |
| 15. Flumpher T. Quidديو | |

The 10 Most Significant Events in VD History

1. The First Issue (VD #1): got it all started!
2. BLACK HOLE Affair (VD #9): established BRUX as a strict GM
3. Alex's Column Starts (VD #60): brought enjoyment to many
4. Controversy Editorial (VD #74): marked a significant change in VD's editorial policy
5. Fourth Annish (VD #85): biggest zine ever
6. Going Ditto (VD #76): substantial reduction in both cost and readability
7. Alex's Column Folds (VD #85): end of an era
8. Steve Knight Edits Houserules (VD #85): they had been hopelessly disorganized
9. RIGEL Opens (VD #73): redefined the term "press war"!
10. Tro Affair (VD #30): touched off one of the biggest GMing debates ever heard in the hobby

The 30 Very Best Pieces of Writing Ever to be Published in VD (all are classics)

- | | |
|---|------------|
| 1. "Pity the Monsters", Garry Hamlin, VD #60 | humor |
| 2. "Broken Record", Chuff Afflerbach, VD #70 | satire |
| 3. "Press Wars", Steve Knight, VD #93 | fiction |
| 4. "Roll Over BeethovenCon", BRUX Linsey, VD #68 | satire |
| 5. "Profile of a Diplomacy Player: Conrad Shortley", Jack Masters, VD #10 | fiction |
| 6. "The Pilgrim Meets Dipmaster", Bob Olsen, VD #66 | fiction |
| 7. "Profile of a Diplomacy Player: Luther X", Jack Masters, VD #7 | fiction |
| 8. "If I Ran the Zoo", Dr. Breuss, VD #75 | satire |
| 9. Black Forest Press, Nelson Heintzman, VD #93 | fiction |
| 10. "My First DipCon -- The Untold Story", Steve Knight, VD #83 | con review |
| 11. "Hail Brucifer!", Gary Coughlan, VD #85 | satire |
| 12. "Holy Smoke, Baltimore was a Blast!", BRUX Linsey, VD #64 | con review |
| 13. "Falklands Fall", Chuff Afflerbach, VD #61 | nonfiction |
| 14. "Excuses, Excuses", no single author, VD #58 | humor |
| 15. "And I Bet You Thought Your Job Was Aggravating", Judy Linsey, VD #56 | humor |
| 16. The Shep Rose Letter, "Shep Rose", VD #87 | fiction |
| 17. "I'm OK Charlie, Involving the Shattered Power", Randolph Sayth, VD #16 | strategy |
| 18. "Stalking the Rocky Mountain Oyster", Jake Halvenstadt, VD #60 | nonfiction |
| 19. "The Guess", Mark Berch, VD #90 | fiction |
| 20. "The Sneakiest Plot in the World!", BRUX Linsey, VD #23 | fiction |
| 21. "What In the Universe", Konrad Baumister, VD #31 | humor |
| 22. "The True Story of Creation", Carl McFarlin, VD #77 | satire |
| 23. "How Not to Get a Puppet", BRUX Linsey, VD #85 | strategy |
| 24. "The Wild Life", Aline Thompson, VD #78 | humor |
| 25. "A Diplomat for all Seasons", Gary Coughlan, VD #20 | fiction |
| 26. "Postage Dues and Don'ts", Chuff Afflerbach, VD #85 | nonfiction |
| 27. "Elements of Persuasion", BRUX Linsey, VD #90 | analysis |
| 28. Alex's Column: Riverside Amusement Park, Alex Lord, VD #62 | humor |
| 29. "The Perils of Diplomacy by Phone", Pat Conlon, VD #83 | humor |
| 30. "Look at the Size of His Fleet!", BRUX Linsey, VD #57 | humor |

The Lists of Doom are intended to provoke discussion and debate.

So let me hear it, but good!

The Dippy Crossword Contest

Can you solve this monstrosity? Five free issues will go to one person, selected at random (by coin flip), from among all those who submit a correct solution to the Dippy Crossword Puzzle which follows. Second place gets two issues. If no one gets the whole solution, winner(s) will be determined by number of letters filled in correctly. You may use a xerox of the page with the grid, or draw your own, or (if you want to lose brownie points with me) you may even rip the page out of VD and fill it in. Short contest deadline this time: May 11, 1984.

The author makes no apologies for the obscurity of any clues or answers.

ACROSS

1. Aldrin
5. Play-by-mail Uno
9. Flumpher's name for BRUK
13. Baltimore Dippy field
17. Capture the 18th
18. You, to yourself
19. I fled Tehran
20. Squire of great re
21. Rare commodity among Dip players
23. Common German sight after S'01
25. Oregon gatherings
27. The author of this article...
28. Substance in a Dipper's genes
29. Coughlan's anathema
31. Youngstown is a variant
34. Before
35. Ain't
36. Expression of disgust
38. 48 1/2 km of subpar
39. I'm Jewish -- only this comes between me and dough
40. One on every VD cover
41. Body of water
43. Kathy's a live
45. Card expert
48. Not over it
50. Indian cities
54. Home to Flat Bellum
55. Baseball Hall of Famer
56. Bersaglieri game
58. Canadian zine's expression of pain
59. Cute Doonie
60. Laugh in agony
62. BRUKian diplomatic resource
64. There's more than one of me! (Two words)

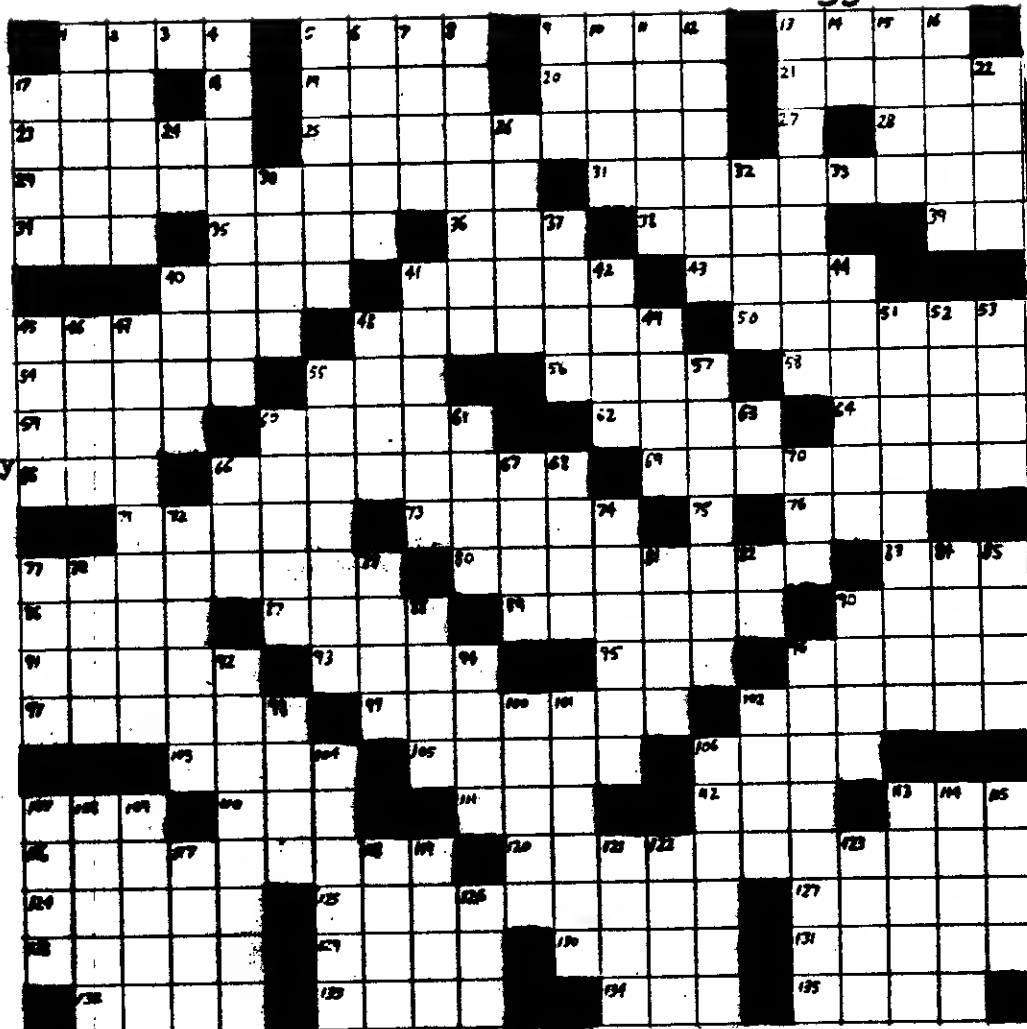
65. Facial feature
66. Seven years between
69. Kitchen utensil
71. Public notice, father
73. Usual winner of Kathy's games as Italy
75. Retreats
76. Curvy letter
77. Hare's visage
80. Force a retreat
83. A Via- (amb)
86. Feed the Kitty
87. Thailand
89. Italy and Turkey might bounce here in '01
90. Horny sound
91. He holds and supports the world
93. Faz' pub
95. If it's open, grab it!
96. Pudge's muffin
97. Novice or outsider
99. Key goes through it
102. River near BRUK
103. Southern Mediterranean
105. Maybe Dippy's top player
106. Result of A Gre H, A Gre S A Bul
107. Kathy, Lousy, Woody, Krud, e.g.
110. Coughlan, to Liesnard
111. Swider and Barno, e.g.
112. N. African country, abbr.
113. Back door to England
116. Games available for 84 players
120. Borders on 9 spaces
124. Better than approximate
125. What most hobbyists have done to the BLACK HOLE Affair

127. Royal Organization of Almost Giddy Uvulvas
128. Linsey of the Fresa Wars
129. Joan's favorite animal sound
130. Miami's county
131. 'eil 'ail, 'err
132. Location of most of U.S.S.R. and Turkey
133. Olsen's reputation
134. Someone so pathetic he can't even keep his vowels
135. Austrian Organization of Yellowbellied Losers

DOWN

1. Rauterberg or Beyerlein
2. Ally
3. Izzard
4. Number of Doonies
5. Michalski's friend
6. Future baseball Hall of Famer, probably
7. Looki ati thisi fori directionsi
8. Ungrammatically angular
9. Ditter or Walker
10. What you do for certain countries when you're in a Bourae
11. Credit for a supply center goes to its
12. Where most New Year's ByrneCons would be held if Kathy and John got evicted
13. Joshua, Francine, and Samantha
14. Santa's chortle
15. Publishes a fattening zine
16. Xerox too light? Add
17. Merchant's offering
22. F Kie-Ber in S'01

24. F'01: A Gal-Ukr,
A Edi-Nwy
26. Steve is so obtuse
30. Great Britain
32. Compensated
33. Army
37. BRUX's secret codeword
in Sleepless Knights
40. One who is simultaneously
intelligent, handsome,
and modest about it
41. Local
42. Julie displayed them
at Origins '82
44. Cute little Ozogs
45. Too tiny to contain a
pair of L's
46. Most populous state
(abbr.)
47. Grow older, but not
entirely
48. Jeff Albrecht's home
49. Grows browner
51. Arnawoodian molestees
52. Dimmer state
53. Former backup center for
UCLA basketball team
55. What Maggie might say
when the truth hasn't
worked for her husband
(three words)
57. What one might do to
gold
60. Libyans and Tunisians
61. Material used in forming
Dippy's rectangular prism
63. Et ___, Bruxus?
66. Noted player and province
67. New Mexico Island (abbr.)
68. Facilitates sample
sending
70. Round letter
72. England might get 3
'01 builds in these
74. No Letters Really
Do Together Here (abbr.)
77. Extra "A" keeps it from
being tall
78. Kathy's way of saying
"come in"
79. Far end of the board,
from France
81. Musical instrument
82. Lynn Torkelson's home



84. Gambling town
85. Order units in S'01
88. Out-of-this-world
province abbreviation
90. Brigham Young Dippy
Diehard
92. Deadwood's little
buttercup
94. Cost of a sub to
Cheesecake, plus 10¢
96. Russia might bounce
with Austria here in '01
98. Nautilus captain
100. Enter, You Silly Midget
Persian! (sigh...)
101. Absolutely baffled
trying to figure y there
is a letter missing
102. F Helg-
104. The hobby
106. Alice met a mad one
107. Hehe doubledouble
orderordered
108. Company Of Xenophobes
Absolutely Anonymous
109. VD players Kane, Meisner,
Kleiman, and Beyerlein

113. The boot
114. Home of Tiara, Lorique,
and Ty-Threepio
115. I see you are
117. Et cetera I (I
suppose...)
118. Ireland
119. Number of English
wins in VD
121. ledon lyrehC
122. Larry Peery contest
123. Publisher of Nothing
Whatsoever
126. Peetookays

Now you all know
why I don't make a living
writing crossword puzzles!

The following is reprinted, slightly edited, from Vol 81 File #155, just in. Comments in double parentheses are mine; the rest is Randolph.

The 1984 Runestone Zine & GM Poll

THE EIGHTH ANNUAL NORTH AMERICAN ZINE POLL: You may rate any publication substantially devoted to Diplomacy (including genzines, house zines of organizations, etc.) of which you have seen more than two issues since April 1, 1983. Rate the series, not individual issues; do not base votes on hobby feuds, your agreement or disagreement with the editor's opinions, etc. Rate each zine on a scale of 0 to 10 (0 being the lowest possible rating, 10 the highest). No fractions, please. Specify subzines and rate them separately from the parent zine; subzines will be listed separately. Publishers may not rate their own zines. Sign your ballot and indicate one way in which you participate in the hobby. ((E.g. "I sub to zine XXX", "I play in game 1983YR", etc.)) All votes will be kept confidential. Please list the zines ALPHABETICALLY to make tabulation of the results easier. I reserve the right to tabulate or ignore ballots which do not follow the format outlined above.

THE SEVENTH ANNUAL NORTH AMERICAN GAMESMASTER POLL: You may rate any GM in whose postal game or games you were a player during the year beginning April 1, 1983, and whom you played under for long enough to gain an objective assessment of his or her competence as a GM. Rate each GM on a scale of 0 to 10 (0 being the lowest possible rating, 10 the highest). No fractions, please. Gamesmasters may not rate themselves. Others may not rate GMs in whose games they were not active players during the poll period. Rate each GM by NAME, not by zine. Votes which do not use the GM's name will not be tabulated. ((And please remember to distinguish between the two Ron Browns if you vote for either.)) Please list the GMs in ALPHABETICAL ORDER by SURNAME.

The deadline for both polls is June 29, 1984. Results will be tabulated as soon thereafter as possible, and will be released as they become available to anyone wishing to phone. Please rate only North American zines and GMs, though any readers living outside North America are welcome to participate. Send all ballots to the above address. ((The address is Randolph Smyth, 212 Alexander St. S.E., Medicine Hat, Alberta, CANADA T1A 0R1. His phone number is (403) 526-7913. It is important to send your ballot early, because in my experience mail from the U.S. to Alberta can very easily take three or four weeks!))

CHANGES AND OTHER NOTES PERTAINING TO THIS YEAR'S ANNOUNCEMENT:

I have letters and comments from Mark Berch, Steve Longley, and Bruce Linsey on how to change the poll this year. ((My comments were in the BRUK Speaks editorial in VD #81.)) Some comments I agree with and some I don't (more below), but Mark and Steve seemed to agree that any changes should be "transparent" to the voters, i.e. the format of voting should be essentially unchanged. Hence the only real change above is to specify that zine poll voters should have seen more than two issues during the year.

Who is eligible to vote? This is a matter of great concern, it seems, but everyone also agrees that hard and fast rules would be unenforceable. The only one I can realistically hope to monitor has been on the books for years: GMs cannot vote for themselves, publishers cannot vote for their own zines. A new rule this year, that a voter should have seen more than two issues of a zine, is just a common-sense guideline that I must leave to the individual's honour. I've also left in the caution to avoid voting on the basis of feuds, though Bruce among others has pointed out that this is not only unenforceable but probably impractical as well. Still, I think I should at least TRY to encourage objectivity in the voters.

Bruce also brought up the question of zine publishers voting for subzines which they carry, and subzine editors voting for their "parents." I see nothing wrong with this, as conflict-of-interest should be no greater than between any other good friends

in the hobby. On the other hand, he suggests that anyone (not necessarily a player) should be able to vote for a GM; this, I think, degrades the GM poll. A non-player who spends his time scanning games closely enough to make an informed judgement of a GM's activities has, in my opinion, an ulterior motive for going through the process in the first place. On balance, I think the restriction to a GM's players is the best way to keep this. ((Well, I still don't agree, but that's the rules. Vote only for GMs you've played under since April 1, 1983 (which means I can't vote in the GM poll at all this year). A list of Doomies who are eligible to vote for me as a GM will appear somewhere in this issue.))

How should results be reported? Mad Policy uses a preference matrix to rank the zines in the British poll; both Steve and Mark like this system better than the old Runestone one of averaging everyone's vote. The defect in the Runestone method is that everyone has a different idea of what a vote of "6" represents. Does this mean the zine is better or worse than average? The best or the worst (or somewhere in between) of all the zines they receive? The preference matrix ignores the numbers per se, treating all votes as relative to each other.

It has its own deficiencies; the voter might not recognize his own inputs by the time they've been massaged to produce results. Taking the extreme examples, a ballot listing just two zines with votes of 10 and 9 is treated exactly the same way as votes of 10 and 0, or 1 and 0; completely different reactions to this pair of zines, I'm sure most people would agree. The matrix method works best when the same zines are being compared repeatedly; i.e. a large number of voters reviewing a small number of zines. The more fragmented the responses are, the less confidence I have in the method. In Britain last year, 101 respondents tabulated 1088 votes for 32 zines on the main list; 10.8 votes per voter and 34 votes per zine. The Runestone poll had 76 respondents and 964 votes for 42 zines (12.5 votes/voter, 23 votes/zine). I don't think the matrix system will work as well here, but whether the results will be SIGNIFICANTLY worse is questionable. Let's just say that the British method isn't necessarily a panacea.

So, this year I'll generate TWO lists, one based on each method. I'd prefer to be definitive about this, but it seems there will always be someone prepared to bitch about any single ranking method, so I'll give a "two-track" policy a try this year.

To complete the democratization of the poll, I'll also be including a full breakdown of the results cast for all zines (how many zeros, how many ones...) for the sake of anyone who's still dissatisfied. I have some misgivings; this release will be an experiment for 1984, which may not be renewed in future years depending on developments. Anyone will be able to generate their own ranking based on their own criteria, and that may become more of a headache than a help. Mark is already in the habit of modifying the "official" ranking for publication in DD, and that has provoked polite disclaimers from the very publisher who gained the most from the change. While I personally feel that Mark's changes may have created a more "sensible" list, I'm not happy with a policy of post facto criteria selection by individual publishers.

For instance, FSF had nine votes last year -- one short of my predetermined main-list cutoff. If I'd scanned the results before making the decision about cutoffs, there would have been a certain temptation to set the requirements a shade lower -- the zine would have placed quite well (better than it deserved). A publisher who receives this information from the poll before specifying how he intends to use it will be open to the criticism that he's deliberately chosen conditions to boost or drop the rank of certain zines. So, I urge anyone who may be planning to make out their own report from the data to publicize their chosen criteria before the polling deadline.

((IMPORTANT NOTE HERE: normally I'd just go along with the pollster's method for choosing a ranking criterion, but in my opinion the only glaring error in the way Randolph is doing things this year is that he will be generating two lists, not one.

This could easily result in a pair of number one zines!

I have a way of creating a final ranking which I would strongly urge Randolph to adopt, as I don't believe it compromises anything he is doing at all. (It's not too late, Randolph!) In any event, be it known that the following method will be used to generate the final rankings in VD's published results: the two lists generated by Randolph will simply be added together! That is, if a zine places 2nd on one of Randolph's lists and 4th on the other, it will have a net score of 6 for the finalized list. The lowest net score will be the winner of the poll, and so on. Ties in the net rankings will be broken by giving preference (a lower net score) to the zine which did better in Randolph's averaging ranking. What could be simpler -- and now we will have a definitive list! I will be urging Randolph to take this final step with the poll's "official" results, too. Comments?))

Grudge votes and filters: If hobby relationships were altogether amicable, all other matters arising from the conduct of the poll would be dry theoretical questions of sampling and statistical methods, of interest to very few. The only thing that really gets people's dander up (including mine, now) is deliberate attempts to pervert the poll results. The only serious challenge to the poll's procedures has come up in the last few years when it became obvious that some individuals were being blatantly and consistently un-objective, i.e. voting on the basis of hobby feuds which had nothing to do with zine or Gming quality. These "grudge votes" denied well-deserved recognition to people who happened to be on the bad side of a small minority of voters. The only thing a neutral pollster can do about this is to devise a system which minimizes the effect of such small groups of "outlying" votes. The British matrix system is quite good for this, but as noted above, it has other flaws; the comments below refer to changes to the averaging system.

First of all, despite the howls of protest, are grudge votes really out of place in the poll? One may argue that everyone is entitled to an opinion, even (or especially) one that varies markedly from the norm. I used to ignore all the botching myself (never having been a particular target of grudges, to my knowledge), thinking that the suffering publishers had brought it on themselves to some extent. If their editorials, personality, etc., was offensive to any significant number of voters, why shouldn't this be reflected in the final results?

Only after actually doing the poll last year did I change my mind. The cases of abuse by an insignificant number of voters still skews the uncorrected result to the point where it's not a true reflection of the vast majority's opinion. You know, this ain't no small job, and when I get through it all I like to think that the results have some meaning, to myself and to the hobby. I harboured a personal irritation for some months at the people who were clearly grudge-voting (even when I didn't know them otherwise) because they showed so little respect for the idea of the poll and my own efforts in conducting it. That was the emotional (=real) reason for turning me against grudge votes, but it led to a deeper consideration of what was wrong with the practice.

Firstly, it caters to the whims of the most negative aspects of the hobby. A single "zero" vote can significantly bring down a zine rated as outstanding by a large number of others; a zine's booster cannot cancel such an "opinion" with a good rating. (By the way, in 1983 I never saw a vote which was HIGHER than a zine seemed to deserve based on the masses of voters...only lower.)

Secondly, grudge voting goes against what I (and, I believe, most others) see as the purpose of the poll. The results should be a guide to anyone unfamiliar with a zine, particularly novices: which ones are most worthy of a request for a sample? The new reader may despise the zine after going through that sample, but that's HIS choice: a grudge vote from one or two voters with a chip on their shoulder should have no part of that process. A good showing in the poll is also encouragement for putting out an excellent zine. Constructive criticism will be factored into the ratings of mediocre zines, but grudge votes are purely and simply destructive.

Thirdly, grudge votes actually diminish the "spread" of the final results (at least, in the 1983 poll). A strong element of naked envy is apparent in grudge voting: those zines that topped the poll also collected the most votes under 3; they won in spite of opposition. (The idea that grudge voters only come out of the woodwork in order to shoot down hard work and success is perhaps the most damning aspect of the whole thing.) Grudge votes therefore "muddy the waters".

Having determined that grudge voting is a Bad Thing, how am I to minimize the effects? If you intend to give the greatest credence to the preference matrix ranking, no problem: zines voted zero are simply "lowest" on that ballot, there will be others that vote it "highest", and the above criticisms do not apply.

As for the system of ranking averages, the previous method will be changed as follows: the top 8% and bottom 8% of all votes (rounded DOWN) will be dropped from the total in determining the average this year. This means no correction for any zine which fails to garner over 12 votes -- it's hard to say what votes are "grudge" with such a small sample -- but all others will be stripped of up to 16% of the total votes cast for it. This will eliminate the worst of the problem while simultaneously wiping out the contribution of anyone voting a zine an unreasonably high score. We'll see what happens...

((This is another change for which I had argued strongly, and I commend Randolph for making it. Discounting the top-and-bottom X% of a vote is a widely used procedure among statisticians, because it does indeed lead to more valid results.

It is clear that Randolph has paid careful attention to how the validity of the poll can be optimized from a mathematical standpoint, and I am very satisfied that the poll is in extremely competent hands. I urge my readers not to try and pervert Randolph's efforts by casting grudge votes for anyone, even though the above provision would tend to reduce their effect.))

I've referred to "zines" (i.e. the zine poll) in several places above. The same considerations apply to the GM poll as well. All cutoffs to make the main lists also remain the same as last year: that seemed to work out OK. ((10 for zines; 5 for subzines and GMs.))

I would like to see a few more respondents to this one than last year's 76 -- and ON TIME! -- three ballots had to be discarded for coming in late last year, two of those POSTMARKED after the deadline! I'm not trying to be a S.O.B. about throwing these out, but there comes a point quite early on where the calculation incorporates all votes -- I can't keep going back and recalculating to take late entries into account.

((DOOMIES: Please get out there and vote this year! The more of you that vote, the more representative a sample we'll have. VD will be giving extensive coverage to the poll results this year. Thanks for your cooperation.))

The following people are eligible to vote for Bruce Linsey in the GM poll:

Steve Angle	Michael Ditz	John Kador	Bob Olsen
Peter Ansoff	Mark Duarte	Eric Kane	Brian Orloff
Steve Arnawoodian	Richard Edison	Mike Kettman	Bob Osuch
Mike Barbo	Greg Ellis	Dudley Kidd	Mark Paul
Brent Bennett	Michael Frick	Dave Kleiman	Jeff Punches
Doug Beyerlein	Ruth Glaspey	Steve Knight	Paul Rautenberg
Peter Blitstein	Dan Gorham	Larry Lansing	Rich Reilly
Don Bard	Jake Halverstadt	Mark Larzelere	Larry Saleski
Craig Cameron	Ty Hare	George Leritte	Rob Schmund
Dave Carter	Nelson Heintzman	Mark Lew	Dave Spector
Jim Chatfield	Bob Hewerton	John MacFarlane	Bob Sweeney
Pat Conlon	Randal Husk	Mike Mazzer	Don Williams
John Davies	Edmund Jedry	Mike Meisner	Rob Wittmond
Peter DeLuca	Bryan Jurkowski	Dave Newell	Ed Wrobel

Shopping adventure a whole new game

By Alxandrs Lord

In the past, people looked forward to their weekly shopping spree at the supermarket. It was an enjoyable outing and they went off to the store with new recipes in hand, excitedly keeping an eye out for bargains. There was a certain freedom of mind when they walked through the electric doors because they weren't preoccupied with bags full of bottles to return and pocketbooks full of coupons.

A once-pleasant trip to the supermarket has turned into a mission impossible for the average person trying to plan a dinner menu that is both nutritious and gourmet. Unfortunately, safety must play a role in meal planning nowadays.

Grabbing a basket, a shopper takes out the coupon folder, unfolds the sales flyer and quickly rips a calculator out of its case before being really ready to shop. As one enters the store, the cart is already cluttered with the budgeting paraphernalia that is an integral part of the preparations for this once-a-week adventure.

After returning bottles, the shopper guides the cart to the dairy case. Viewing the numerous containers of milk, the shopper is reminded of last night's news report advising people to buy milk in paper cartons instead of plastic jugs. It seems vitamins are lost when light penetrates plastic. With a sigh, the shopper grabs a paper carton of milk and moves down the aisle toward the produce section.

Here, the shopper is surrounded by green vegetables and bountiful fruits that have probably been sprayed with EDB. Disappointed and empty-handed, it's off toward a "safer" area, the pasta and rice section. Where once there was rice the shelves are bare. Add a box of egg noodles to the cart and continue on, into the meat section. Hoping there is not too much red dye in the hamburger the shopper picks up a package and throws it into the cart, to join the noodles.

Avoiding the deli and all those nitrates, the next stop is the cake mix section, sparking the idea of hot muffins for dinner. The gaze is met with more empty shelves. A favorite muffin mix has followed the rice into the latest list of "no-no's" for smart shoppers.

On the verge of tears, the shopper pushes the near-empty cart into the baked goods section to choose a loaf of bread without all those nasty preservatives. Unable to make a decision, the shopper gives up and runs toward the express lane with two, measly items.

Upon returning home, the exhausted shopper is suffering from P.S.D., post-shopping-depression, worried about choosing the wrong products after all and out of ideas for dinner.

The writer is a free-lance author from Hannacroix.

It would appear that one of VD's most prominent writers is moving up in the world. The article to the left was discovered hiding in the "Perepectives" section of the Albany Times Union, dated March 11, 1984. Sse, folks, writing for VD can help you get started on an exciting and profitable carser too! Just remember where Alex got her etart when she wins her first Pulitzer Prize.

This article was obtained for print by VD during a recent visit to the Hannacroix Barber Shop, at which time Alex was finally introduced to Diplomacy for the first time, having never seen the game before.

By sheer coincidence, the correspondence below also appeared in the Albany Times Union, dated April 3, 1984.

VD is always proud to present its readers with Alex's lighthearted and witty writing, even when it's reprinted from ~~some obscure site like~~ the Times Union.

Cigarette smoke

To the Editor:

I enjoyed reading Anita Weber's letter suggesting that the woman who was bothered by cigarette smoke refrain from going to bars, and instead stay home where the smoke can't bother her. As one who is not only bothered by, but actually allergic to, cigarette smoke, I was delighted by the elegant simplicity of Ms. Weber's solution, but why stop with bars?

I enjoy going out to eat, but am frequently bothered by smoke in public restaurants. Perhaps I can solve this problem simply by eating at home. Smoke bothers me in public bus terminals. But of course, I am hardly the sort who would want to impose my absurd fetish for clean air upon other — I should simply take the car instead. Smoke bothers me at work, too, but that is my fault for not seeking a different job, of course.

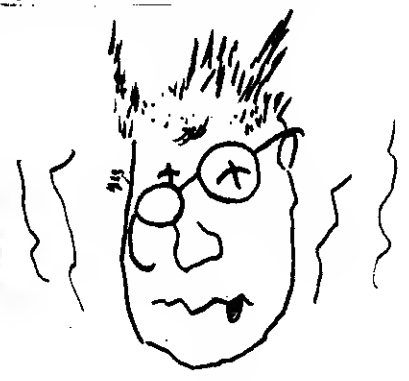
Ms. Weber's recommendation is indeed worthy of applause. We non-smokers, in our selfish and petty desire to breathe, should not even think of restricting the right of smokers to pollute our air. I'd elaborate further, but I've got to run. They're having a sale on large glass bubbles at the local department store.

BRUCE LINSEY

Dalton, Mass.



BEFORE



AFTER

This coupon entitles the bearer to one free haircut at the Hannacroix Barber Shop. (*) Not only do you get the world's cutest haircutter, but you get a wondrousful haircut as well. (See photos of BRUX at the right as evidence.)

(*) Brillo-haired peacs marchsrs from Endwell have to pay extra.

You're running a postal Diplomacy game, and all of a sudden you hear someone yell out those dreaded words...

GM Interference!

Much discussion has been generated by the question of just what a gamesmaster can or cannot do before he is said to be interfering in a game. Certainly, we will all agree that the GM is supposed to act as a strictly neutral party and run his games in an impartial, unbiased manner. Yet within that description there is still plenty of room for debate. Between the impenetrable armor of the mythical GM who sits high upon his white steed of neutrality and the sticky black tar pits of out-and-out interference is a large, misty grey area in which lurk countless numbers of questionable situations.

Well, you folks know me well enough by now to know that I enjoy exploring the haziest, greyest areas of postal Diplomacy. So take a trip with me into the grey mists of GM interference, and we'll see just what shadowy circumstances we might bump into. And if you'll take the time to submit some well-thought-out answers to the questions which follow, we'll make this into another discussion similar to "Off the Record!" and "Gamesmasters and the Telephone". All readers who wish to share their thoughts on the matter are invited to participate in this discussion, and all GMs are invited to pay careful attention to the responses when they are published.

Now, pretend you're the GM...

SITUATION 1: Many GMs start off their game reports with a headline describing some phase of the action on the board. But how far can a GM go? Which of the following game headlines are acceptable, and which interfere? And why?

"FRANCE ATTACKS GERMANY!"

"FRANCE, GERMANY SIGN PACT!"

"FRANCE STIRS UP EUROPE AGAINST GERMANY!"

"FRANCE STABS GERMANY -- OR IS IT A STAB?"

"FRANCE, GERMANY ABOUT TO GO TO WAR!"

How do you distinguish between acceptable and unacceptable headlines for a game?

SITUATION 2: It is a common practice for GMs to call players collect if they are about to miss their moves. Is this acceptable procedure, or is it interference? If it is acceptable, then how about the GM who calls because a player has left one unit out of several unordered? Is he interfering? Where do you draw the line in this situation?

SITUATION 3: You're GMing a game from your home town of Fake Snowbegone, Minnesota. One of your players from Noway Hoosee, California, calls you up one night, and the conversation runs as follows:

"Hello, Mr. GM. I've a favor to ask you. I've typed up a phony readjudication for my game in your zine, and I want to send it to you so that you can mail it to the Russian player for me. That way, I can get a Fake Snowbegone postmark."

"I'm sorry, Mr. Player, I can't help you deceive another player. That would be GM interference."

"Just a minute, Mr. GM. What about Joe Schmoe, who lives 40 miles from you in Duluth and is also in the game? He can get your postmark any time he likes without your help. That's an unfair advantage! All I'm asking you to do is help reduce the disadvantage I am faced with due to an accident of geography. I don't see how that's interfering."

Do you agree to mail the phony readjudication for him? If not, how do you refute his logic?

SITUATION 4: Many GMs like to banter with their players in the game's press, using a dateline reserved solely for the GM. But where does banter stop and interference begin? Which of the following press items from the GM constitute interferences, and why?

"TURKEY to RUSSIA: My move to the Black Sea is purely defensive. Trust me."

"GM to TURKEY: I wouldn't trust you as far as I could thrust you!"

"GM to RUSSIA: Do you really trust him? Hah!"

"GM to TURKEY: Trust you? With all those stabs you've pulled off recently in other zines?"

"GM to TURKEY: Hyork, hyork!"

SITUATION 5: You're GMing a game in which a player is about to win unless the other players band together to stop him. As it happens, you were all set to publish an article you had written entitled "How to Stop the Leader". Although the article of course does not mention this particular game, would you be interfering to publish it right now, when it might well affect the game? (Suggestion: send it to VD for the free issues...)

Or consider a different example: you have just opened a game in this issue. Do you publish that article on the Lepanto Opening as you had planned, or must you wait? How does one reconcile one's GMing responsibilities with one's rights as a publisher in this sort of situation?

SITUATION 6: A hobby member has done something for which you feel obligated to criticize him in your zine. Maybe he has folded his zine and stolen everyone's sub money, yours included. Or perhaps he has been convicted of attempting to assassinate the President of the United States. The problem is, he's playing in one of your games. Is it interference to publicly chastise one of your players (and thus risk turning others against him in his game) for something unrelated to the game?

SITUATION 7: A player of yours calls you, and during the course of the conversation asks if you've spoken recently with another player. Can you answer? What if he wants to know whether the other player has recently called you to find out his game results for the season just played? How far can a GM (who is, after all, a human being within the social network of the hobby) go when it comes to discussing his conversations and interactions with his players (who in many cases may be personal friends)?

SITUATION 8: One of your players submits for publication an article which you know is an elaborate attempt to deceive a fellow player about his playing style. Do you publish his article, and in doing so aid his deception? If his article is entitled, "Why I Like to Play for Two-way Draws" and you were also planning to publish the latest ratings which will show that he has just won three games, what do you do?

SITUATION 9: A player asks you, the GM, for your opinion of another player. Being ethical, you don't say a word, of course. Then he says this: "OK, Mr. GM, I want to purchase some of those old zines you have for sale, and specifically I want to buy the ones which contain endgame statements from and about this other player. These are, after all, in the public domain." You know that these issues will reveal the other player for the scam-sucking slime that he is. Can you sell them to the player requesting them? Can you refuse to do so? (Aaaaarrrgh...)

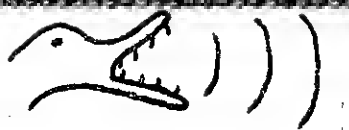
SITUATION 10: As a GM, you have (horrors!) made a judgement call and separated the seasons because there were lots of adjustments due this winter. A few days later, the Frenchman calls you to protest. The conversation goes as follows:

"Mr. CM, I protest. I built a fleet in Breet with the intention of stabbing England in the spring by moving it to the Channel. Now that the seasons are separated, England will know he is being stabbed and will stand me out of the Channel."

"Wait a minute, Mr. Frenchman. He could have seen your build anyway by using conditional orders."

"But he wouldn't have. England is too careless a sort of player to write conditionals, and you know it."

The CM's option of separating seasons without prior warning are not covered in your house rules. Does France have a valid point? Have you interfered in the game?



BRUX Speaks
Selfish?

I seem to be taking a fair amount of criticism over my grumbling at the way various hobby services take money from people who do not use them. Is Bruce Linsey really "selfish" for not wanting to pay a diptax to support the various hobby projects? Is he really not a "hobby supportive type"? Before condemning me, I hope that certain people would give consideration to the following facts.

Several months ago, Mike Mills ran an auction to raise money for the hobby services. Over \$300 was raised, and distributed to the Boardman Number Custodian, the Miller Number Custodian, the Orphan Games Director, and others. The hobby's Novice Packet Custodian, however, asked for nothing. He got exactly what he asked for.

According to Robert Sacks' latest issue of Known Game Openings, the Metro Detroit Gamers have finally released the proceeds from DipCon 1983. If Sacks is to be believed (a risky proposition at times), the MDG paid \$300 to Ben Schilling, who then promptly dispersed the money to the Boardman Number Custodian, the Miller Number Custodian, and the Orphan Games Director. The hobby's Novice Packet Coordinator (or whatever the title is. Who cares...?) was present at the convention, and was given the opportunity to request a cut of the proceeds. He asked for nothing. He got exactly what he asked for.

The Novice Packet sells for a dollar, but frequently requests are received minus the fee. Regardless of whether the money is enclosed, Supernova goes in the mail, almost always the next day. The person requesting it is never asked for a dollar.

I run a hobby service because I love this hobby and I want others to have an easy time of joining it, so that they too might have the opportunity to have the kind of fun I have had. I get letters in response to Supernova very often, many of them full of questions from eager novices (who remind me of squishy little puppies) wanting to know more. These questions are always answered, often privately, occasionally in VD.

But I have not recently, and never again will, accept money because I happen to have the privilege of publishing Supernova -- except for the dollar of those who buy it. The day that my hobby becomes an excuse to put my hand out for other people's money is the day I'll find another hobby. If Supernova starts to go too much into the red, I can always charge more for it. People who do not use it will never have to pay for it. And that is consistent with my stance that no hobby member should have to pay for a service he is not buying. And that, in my opinion, is consistent with the whole concept of the word "hobby".

Disagree with me if you will, but please at least recognize that my stance is derived from principles about which I feel very strongly, rather than any desire to be selfish.

Lots of miscellaneous stuff this time, and only the back page left...

Some updates and corrections to The Lists of Doom. It is doubtful that the VD letter column has hit 700 pages. Probably 500 to 600 is about right, though I still am comfortably ahead of the second-place Bruxus Bulletin. I neglected to list Richard Kovalok as a charter Doome, and on that score John Davies has resubbed. Now it's questionable whether Mike Jones of Alaska will keep his charter status; he expired with #93. On the list of farthest-away Doomes I have met, Simon Billomess would now be first, of course (the lists were typed a couple of weeks ago).

I see this issue was pretty bad as far as typos are concerned. Hopefully this page will be free of them. On page 22, replying to Joan, "I never understood why some people seem to thing..." should be "...seem to think". Page 34, third line from the bottom, "Bruce laos" should be "Bruce also". Sometimes when typing these things, my fingers thail themselves up in knots, I suppose. Cambodia.

Ron Brown, 1528 El Sereno Place, Bakersfield, CA 93304 has game openings in his excellent Murd'ring Ministers. I recommend very highly as a place to play.

Straight from the Dimmer's Mouth now comes to us straight from the Dimmer's mailbox, as Jim Williams has gone solo. SEPTIM will feature sports games, especially United. It will also carry Jake's High Plains Gorge as a subzine. Jim Williams, 2500 6th St. S.W., Altoona, IA 50009. Subs are 10/\$7.00. Check it out; the Dimmer's a real neat guy.

John Caruso, 160-02 43rd Ave., Flushing, NY 11358 has just come out with DIP, a Diplomacy Introductory Publication. This will be distributed free of charge at FTF gatherings as a means of welcoming interested players to the hobby. It's free, but I'm sure a SASE would be appreciated. Check it out.

Deadwood Corbin has pointed out to me that in question #7 on the Dippy Spaces Quiz, "a unit on the board belongs to a power with one center and no chance of growing" could be located in England, together with five Russian armies, as well as in Tunis. I can't find a way to rebut that, so I stand corrected.

Two quick notes to players: I will not call you collect if you have orders on file, even if some of them are misorders or you have neglected to order some units. In fact, I rarely read order till after the deadline has passed anyway. Also, my deadline is always 8PM my time on a deadline Friday. This is mentioned in the Houserules, but I've spoken with two players recently who were unaware of it. This deadline is strictly enforced; if you're in the middle of phoning in orders and 8PM passes, you will not be allowed to finish. Gee whiz, I'm out of room too soon. (w)

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